

Sept 1988

DEEP RED

4.95

No. 4

The Street-Wise
Monsters of
Frank
Henenlotter

THE LAST
CANNIBAL
FILM
You'll Ever
Need To
See

In the gutter with

STREET TRASH

DOCUMENT OF
THE DEAD

THOU SHALT NOT
KILL... EXCEPT

THE BLIND
DEAD

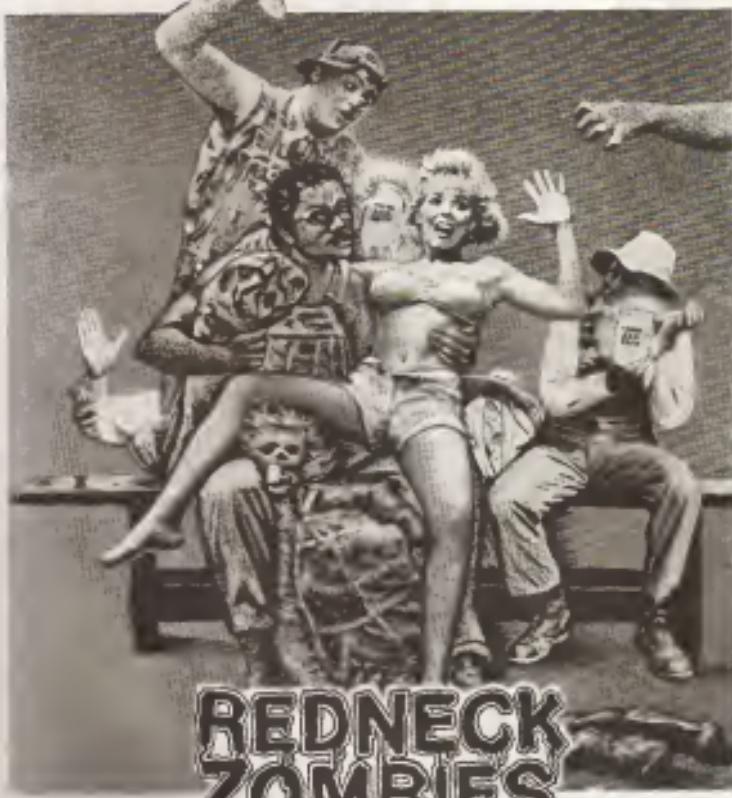


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— Dennis Daniel, DEEP RED MAGAZINE



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LLOYD KAUFMAN AND MICHAEL HERZ
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JIMMY TAYLOR Original Soundtrack by ADRIAN BOND Director of Photography KEN DAWS
Production Design GEORGE SCOTT Edited by EDWARD BISHOP Produced by EDWARD BISHOP
PERICLES LOWRIES and GEORGE SCOTT Directed by PERICLES LOWRIES

ROBERT PROCTOR, EDGE CITY, MERVIN

MICHAEL STONE, RICHARD PRYOR, LINDA RUSSELL

WARNING:
REPRODUCED BY PERMISSION OF REDNECK ZOMBIES.
THIS FILM IS SHOWN TO CAUSE INSIDE LAUGH-TOP
IN LABORATORY ANIMALS.



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Front Cover-STREET TRASH

DEEP RED Issue 4

FantaCo



FOR THE SAKE
OF YOUR SANITY,
PRAY IT ISN'T TRUE!

This issue is
dedicated to:
Tim Considine
and
David Gross

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DEEP RED

You will NEVER forget it!!!



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HELL HOUSE*

A TIDAL WAVE OF TERROR!

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•EDITORIAL•

FRIDAY, MAY 13, 1988

We're taking the day off. Fuck it. Me and the Mrs. have an A-T-T. TWO E and have concluded it would be highly therapeutic to spend the day in hedonistic pursuits: cafe y hoemier, an early matinee, some Mexican food, and some more movies. Besides, Friday the Thirteenth, both the day and the movie holds special memories for us. You see one of our first dates, back in those courtin' and sparklin' days, was a trip to see the original FRIDAY THE 13TH. Now, gee, it's eight years later and here we are again—sitting in the first row, holding hands, all sentimental like, and waiting for PART VII: THE NEW BLOOD. It's kinda cute and all, see?

But, then the movie started. We stiffened in our seats. Both our "Bullshit Meters" went off simultaneously. We hated it. Dogs all around and a "D" Gore Score to boot.

May I humbly apologize to faithful readers everywhere if my articles in FANGORIA encouraged anyone to see this loathsome, detestable, chunk of Ghoulie shit.

Jeez-us, it's getting hard to remember a horror film that isn't a sequel, clone, or a blatant rip-off. The '80's have gone brain-dead after RE-ANIMATOR; it's certainly not because we're at a loss for product, either. The product's there, sure, the ideas aren't. Just check the numbers, there's one after nearly every mainstream genre release now: CRITTERS 2, NIGHTMARE 4, FRIDAY 7, HALLOWEEN 4. These films are no longer made for the original

audience. They're made for ticket buyers.

Well, that's nothing new. Look at films like THE BIRDS, DAY OF THE DEAD, DEAD REAP, A NIGHT TO DIE, etc. and you'll see they were right from the start.

So, what's changed? Horror movies are cheap.

They're cheap to make, cheap to care for.

They're cheap to market. THE

SHAWSHANK REDEMPTION is \$1.50 ACRE,

NIGHTMARE ON ELM STREET is \$1.50 ACRE,

THE HILLS HAVE EYES is \$1.50 ACRE,

etc., etc. They're cheap to market.

They're cheap to market. They're cheap to market.

Humor is the primal emotion. And fear with it. You can't buy it, fake it, or faithfully recreate it unless you're familiar with the territory. T. S. Eliot said, "Hell is empty. Hell is alone; the other figures in it, merely projections. There is nothing to escape from and nothing to escape to."

So, let's cut the shit and get on with the scares. We know where to find 'em and they're damnably cheap. Freddy Krueger, Michael Myers, and Jason Voorhees are the perfect, exploitable commercial vehicles for cynical opportunistic bureaucrats, lawyers, inventors, and producers because these hucksters know the audience is just as "dead in the head" as their zombie, serial-killing machines.

It's time to "get back to where you once belonged," Jo-Jo, Back to Pittsburgh, winter of '88; or that Texas summer of '74, when a measly \$150,000 could buy enough genuine scams to fuel millions of nightmares for decades to come. Talk about cost/benefit effectiveness. Sheet-shit.

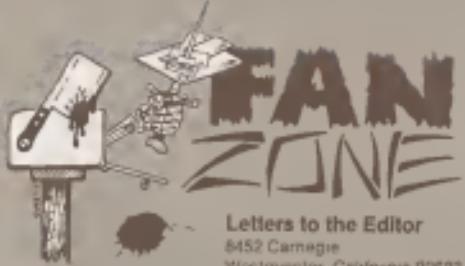
So, to all the fat-assed corporate "horror moguls" out there looking for the next Freddy, Jason, The Shape, or, next year's ALIEN...shit, or get off the pot. Or, better yet, as our beloved STREET TRASH would have it, get down the toilet.

Our work is cut out for us, chums

(Still) Keeping The Faith,

Chas. Balon

Chas. Balon
Editor



Letters to the Editor

8452 Carnegie
Westminster, California 92683

ENGLISH BLOOD

Congratulations on Deep Red—
fantastic stuff! Thanks for
plugging Gauntlet in issue 2. Your
comments about Shock X-Press
were spot on. The censorship
situation over here is so bad
that it's no exaggeration to claim
British horror fans is the
persecuted minority. That
Shock X-Press should be among
several comments at other lar-
nor publications (not to mention
their own readers), rather than
addressing this situation, is
shameful. As you add in your
advisal: "We're all in this to-
gether."

John Martin
Liverpool, England

SPLATTER SCOT

LOVE DEEP RED! The Savini
interview was brilliant, now how
about one with Reeves?

Graham Mac
Bainford, Scotland

U.K. AND CUTS

Regarding your response, I must say
it's pretty impressive. I hope you
can keep it going for several years
to come. I'd like to see more reviews.
Those in the second issue
were much better than in the
first issue, many more obscure
films were included. I'd like to
see more unearthing films covered;
in here in the UK, we've very little
chance to see such films, at least
not in their complete feature memory.

John Hill
Buxton, Lincs, UK

SAVINI INTERVIEW

I just got your issue 3 and I loved
it. The Tom Savini interview was
great; the last I've ever had. I
learned more about Tom than ever.
Hope you have a Part II interview
with him. Thanks.

Jeff Pruzansky
Bethesda, MD

YOU'RE MAKING US BLESH

What I enjoy most about Deep
Red is that all the contributors
are talented writers (we've just
happened to approach a certain
genus). Top-notch layout!

George Maneyville
Livingston, KY

SUPER 8 MONDO MASSACRE

I can understand your dissatisfaction
with CANNIBAL MASS-
ACRE, but that awful hoarding
that you see will baffle me. Even
if you do not enjoy a picture, let
the picture quality at least be
reliable. Rick Sullivan should
have stopped selling those tapes a
long time ago. It's not the boot-
legging so much as having people
subjected to poor quality for a
heck. Purple blood don't make
it. If you get what I mean.

Nathan Schmitt
Lake Success, NY

WHAT?

Well, Deep Red No. 3 is kickin'
satisfying! Bitchen, loco, def,
red cool, great!!! Way nell!

Marc Murphy
Rossmere, OR

DUTCH BLOOD BRO'

Thank you very much for the
article in Deep Red No. 3. I think my
film PANDORA. It is great to read
about your film in a great Ameri-
can horror magazine. Like Deep
Red. In Holland, it is very diffi-
cult to get Deep Red. Don't
stop with this great feature!

Wim Vink
Hilversum

KILL RIFF RAVE

Nice to see a mag that is not only
respectful, but critical of the field.
A great balance between the rabid
slasher-thrash approach of Gere
Guerre and the colorful, but non-
comical slant of Fango.

Desi Schow
Los Angeles, CA

(David is author of new novel
KILL HIT.)

THAT'S WHY WE'RE HERE

You've done it again...Deep Red
No. 3 is the best yet, it has every-
thing that I'm interested in. An
interview with Tom Savini, my
favorite person in the genre bus-
iness. With every interview I can
gain more information on him; this
one is the best yet. I hope to
be the future Savini. SPFX is my
dream. Also the artwork in your
mag is especially breathtaking. I
never get much of a chance to see
art that I've like. And so far as
the issue FX article goes...these guys
are lateral. I hope to be one of
them in DR someday. Also, I've
always been curious about H. P.
Lovecraft's work. Now that I've
learned a little about him, I think
I'll take Doctor's advice and read
his work. Well, case open, I'm
impressed with Deep Red 3. It
seems to get better every issue.
I'll like my complainant Chas. Baker
as well. He's a son of yours.
Deep Red, Horror Holocaust, The
Gore Score. I love them all. I
can relate to you. You tell it like
it is. You're my kind of blood
brother.

Monte Milam
Rutherford Park, CA

PULLER VS WRIGHTSON

I just recently bought Deep Red
No. 3 and it's great! (I'm not a
surtur, I just use that term.) Bruce
Puller is the best writer I've seen.
He hangs up there with Brian
Wrightson.

I am sending a picture of me for
you to SEE the first Deep Red
fan to write and send a picture to
you! Thank you and I look forward
to reading the hot ass
of Deep Red.

Steven "Chairman" Flores
Houston, TX

LOVECRAFT: SAVING BISSETTE?

Well! Deep Red No. 3 was great! I
usually pass up gore mag, but I
love "Lovecraft" on the cover so
I picked it up. Great Tom Savini
interview!!! The Steve Bissette
article was also very good! I
mean, hell, just to see EL TOPO
mentioned!!

Mark Tressler
Rockaway, NJ

DEATH SMILES

I'm writing to you in regard to a
movie reviewed in your Gore
Biosquadron. The name of the film
is DEATH SMILES ON A MUR-
DERER, starring Klaus Kinski and
Eric Aron. It was reviewed by
Todd French. I've been looking for
that flick on tape for several years
and I thought you might know

where could obtain a copy of it.
Any information you could give me
is greatly appreciated.

Green David. Here interview is
Issue 1, really great. Keep up the
good work

Joseph *monstrous*
Oil City, PA

Death Smiles on a Murderer
is an issue 1 review. From
the Nodder family

I SPIT ON YOUR LIES

Recently, I rented the notorious
SPIT ON YOUR GRAVE. Real
horror of a film. But as I
watched the closing credits, some-
thing came to mind. On the video
case, it states "This woman has just
carried, chopped, beheaded and buried
her son." What f*** up? I saw
only four minutes. I watched it
twice to realize what. Did I need an
edited version? The video box also
says that it is "the original uncut
162-minute film." With a full
death missing, the flick doesn't
sound sound to me. What's going
on?

Your response is great! Great
HELLRAZOR article in DR 2.
Keep up the good work!

Nathan Izod
Basking Ridge, NJ

You like the about version. I see
seen it five or six times and I
raise the f***yay, too. You know,
the broken and twisted
part every time.

SORRY, BUT THANKS ANYWAY

I have to admit to being dis-
appointed that there was no
interview with Jeffrey Combs in
Issue 2, but I was not disappointed
with the magazine. It's really great.
I loved Chas. Baker's report on
DR. BUTCHER. I couldn't quit
laughing. The interview with Sybil
Danning was great.

I also wanted to know if you're
ever planning an interview with my
favorite filmmaker—David Cronenberg.
Where are I find records like
DR. BUTCHER, COMBAT SHOCK
or BURIAL GROUND? I've been
all over Michigan trying to find
them on videotape, but no
luck. Most importantly,
where can I find a copy of the
Cronenberg documentary LONG
LIVE THE NEW FLESH?

Laura Etienne
Midland, MI

The Combs interview
dated by DR. BUTCHER
but not in issue 2.
F-TDR 2 and 4
DR. Butcher is in
issues three, four, five, six
and seven. It's in
TDR 22, N. 4.
Combat Shock
is in TDR 20.
Burial Ground
is in TDR 21.

BASKET CASE

切り離されたシャム双生児の復讐。
隣の席に、握りしめる手がほしい。





Permita and pal

The Street-Wise Monsters of Frank Henenlotter

BY TODD FRENCH

"Hey, are you
okay up there?"
BASKET CASE, 1982

"You ate his brains?
Is he dead?"
BRAIN DAMAGE, 1988

Okay, so Frank Henenlotter's characters don't have the synapses that God gave them to provide even a decent cerebellum-serving for a single little brain-sucking parasite. Okay, we'll go one step further and even admit that CASE's Duane and DAMAGE's Brian, both blood brothers with a Monitor On Their Back, would never even be remotely considered as leads in a remake of *MY DINNER WITH ANDRE*. Okay, okay, okay, we'll really put ourselves on the line and say that Henenlotter's people are ~~sooooo~~ dim and socially inept that even Abel (DRILLER KILLER) Ferrara's folks could look down on them. Gettin' to the brass tacks, right?

Hey, while we're at it, we'll go on to assert that adjectives such as "moronic" and "obtuse" just don't come close to conveying the state of non-Eller induced cranial-drain that these guys are walking around in.

But then again, who gives a flying leap from the top of the Hotel Braslan? It's not Henselotter's human protagonists that provide most of the low-down infectious skid-row-he-ho charm which raises his flicks above most of Splatter dem's titus Andronicus assembly line fodder. Hell, why should Frank even think of letting any of his psychos and hapless victims get a whiff of BRAIN DAMAGED Elmer's mind-expanding gush when he gives us monsters as memorably quirky as the latter and CASE's Bellal-gore-craving, street-wise huckster and con-men, adept at getting the gaffaws as well as the griez? Whether they're slam dunking an evil doctor's face into a tray full of scalps or doing a full-gamer into some poor schmuck's head, Henselotter's creatures typify the kind of warped Tex Avery-Lookey Tunc-meets-some-viscera-spillin'-goons sensibility that makes BASKET CASE and BRAIN DAMAGE such morbidly hilarious little jewels.

First off, let's start (as the publicity sheets say) with "the very small, very twisted, and very mad tenant in Room 7 of the Hotel Braslan." And to be sure, Bellal, one half of what has to be filmdom's strangest brotherly love act around, gives BASKET CASE's creaky, slash-the-throat-by-role splatter revenge plot its main kick. He's a twisted-out-of-trace boor who could give THE LODGER (that '44 Jack the Ripper rave) a lesson or two in different rent payments. Imagine if you can, Henschell Gordon Lewis deciding to take a stab at E.T. and you have an idea of what a formidable little lump Bellal really is. Complete with telepathic link-up to brother Duane (leading to some funny Conican Brothers bits as Bellal reacts in a froth to Duane's hormonal urges, claws, and double-rowed fangs, he delivers the gory goods and sends honest farm hog-wild when he throws a major-havoc tantrum, careening off the walls of his hotel room with all the graces of a mutant Dr. J.

However, it's not his murderous artistry which is pathetic Bellal's saving

grace. It's not because he's got a handle on the Jason Voorhees slice-and-dice, the H. G. Lewis tongue rip, the Joe D'Amato intestinal unwind, or the Fulci-fandango on the eyeball.

No way! It's because Bellal is such a smart, funny, and resourceful guy. [Come on, he's stuck in a wicker basket the whole film but he still gets the killing done while Duane twiddles his thumbs.] It's no wonder our gushing aortas are with the genre's favorite malice-in-practice suit.

Of course, Henselotter makes it easy for us to root for his ex-Siamese head-case heroes. Not once in BASKET CASE do we ever feel that Bellal's bloodthirsty quest for vengeance against the trio of irresponsible ass-bite doctors who separated them is wrong. After seeing the wrenching operation scene in which vile medics Kutter, Needleman, and Lifflander (these names!) nonchalantly slice old Bellal off and leave him for the Glad Trashman, there's never a question in

our minds as to what should befall these sensitive reps from the AMA. The fact that Bellal, like The Toxic Avenger, never takes his lie out on decent people (at least for most of the movie, until the jolting final few minutes) also endears him to us. Everyone who gets turned into Bellal burgers is richly deserving of their fate. We applaud when Dad (who insisted on the surgery) meets his end via buzzaw (the shot of his severed legs falling out of the frame is more hysterical than a barrel of rabid lepus-goreut). We nod in satisfaction when petty thief D'Denevan and the bozo in the skid-row cinema receive their dues, and we downright CHEER when the three doctors get their Blue Cross cancelled in rude fashion. In fact, to show you how rotten these bargain-basement sawbones really are during a confrontation between the brothers and veterinarian Kutter, the latter reveals just how despicable the truly is when she believes that Duane and Bellal have come to thank her for the botched hack job. We're right behind old Bellal. Initially, the monster is in THE RIGHT.

It's a Headache
from Hell!



Yet, that's not entirely what makes *Belladonna* the most appealing amputation case in the genre, giving *BASKET CASE* much of its upchuck hilarity. No, what is truly fabulous is that Henenlotter never skimps in terms of his beast's personality even when everyone else is as water thin as an Argentinian heroine on Mater Tenebrorum's hit list. Bellal has a wide range of emotions throughout the entire film: he's possessive of Duane, he's fiercely jealous—he really lets fly with one of his boom-box level screams whenever his brother turns his attention to more orthodox pursuits,

Duane yanking him off the girl's bloody crotch, and by this point, we're as outraged and angry as Duane is over the rape. Whether or not Sharon is dead as a result of Bellal's actions is unknown (Henenlotter makes it deliberately ambiguous), but we're right behind Duane's anguished cry: "I finally meet a girl, she falls in love with me and what do you do? You destroy her!" Henenlotter may have been trying to illustrate the idea that at that stage Bellal is absolutely out of control, or that motivation was necessary for the inevitable confrontation between the siblings. (Henenlotter will use a similar device—incrimination of a female protagonist as justification for the showdown with the hero and his parasite pal in *BRAIN DAMAGE*.) Whatever the reason, it's a bad move and an obvious cheap gross-out effect which merely leaves us a little ambivalent about the creature after rooting for him for nearly an hour-and-a-half. It's a serious miscalculation.

Even so, in the end, we're willing to forgive little Bellal's excesses thanks to the occasional unexpected and affecting image that pops up now and again in the penny-dreadful narrative: a flashback scene to the siblings' childhood with a sympathetic aunt cradling the monstrous Bellal as she reads to both boys; the haunting shot of Bellal's clawed hand gently touching the sleeping Duane's forehead before he embarks on his assault on Sharon; Duane towelling the creature off and promising that he will never betray him. Sequences like these, little tears of blood from Henenlotter before we get another big splash of Deep Red, really stay in the mind long after the flick has reached its squall and predictable denouement.

THE TENANT IN ROOM 7 IS VERY SMALL, VERY TWISTED AND VERY MAD.



BASKET CASE

Like Needham's attractive (but kooky) receptionist Sharon, he's insecure. Duane has to continually reassure him that they will always be together; he's also loyal—he rips O'Donnovan apart after the thief steals Duane's money, and, at the climax, valiantly tries to save his brother's life even after their final falling out. All in all, Bellal's really quite a dimensional piece of latex. The only time we ever deny him our empathy (and the one moment in the movie where Henenlotter totally blows it) is the obligatory rape sequence near the end involving Sharon and Bellal. Up until that instant, the monster has confined his attacks on the one-note villains whom we feel deserve to be merrily pruned. Bellal has already shown the good judgment not to harm decent people like his kindly aunt, and odd-ball prostitute Casey who has befriended Duane. It's disturbing to see



FROM THE CREATOR OF *BASKET CASE*

BRAIN DAMAGE



NOW YOU'RE REALLY OUT OF YOUR MIND...



Bremerton Bialik 2

are hanging from the Hotel Bresnan sign. Despite being convinced that Duane has utterly forsaken him now, Bellal still strives to save Duane's life; though since he's holding him by the neck, he can't help but strangle him to death. The redemptive gesture and our pity for the grotesque creature go a long way in overcoming our feelings of outrage at his irredeemably gross action.

Still, Bellal would have been outclassed to the max against Henenlotter's newest creation, Elmer, the ineffably cheerful parasitic com man of *BRAIN DAMAGE*, a movie which could very well be the harbinger of a new genre hybrid—The Low-Budget Monster Drug Movie. With a plot that could best be described as *Fleabag Without A Face Gets High* (along with a debt to one of Bob Bloch's nastier short stories, *Enoch*), this movie, which blows away *LESS THAN ZERD* as this year's definitive Drug Statement, goes way beyond even the genco yucks and ultra-violent mobid chuckles of Henenlotter's first flick. There is something so right about the groundbreaking use of the monster genre as a metaphor for drug addiction that, if this movie (at least the uncut version which this reviewer saw) isn't one of the best cautionary tales from splatterdom, I don't know what is.

With its pro-or-anti-drug stance couched amidst all the gray-down't-matter-unless-it-flies-to-the-four-winds action, *BRAIN DAMAGE* is the EASY RIDER of horror films, and surely the better of Henenlotter's two movies.

The movie opens with a batzy middle-aged couple, Martha (Lucille Saint-Peters) and Morris (Theo Banes) preparing to feed their finicky "pet" his usual dollop of animal brains. [These opening scenes have the sort of inspired lunacy of Jean Franco directing a *Tender Vittles* commercial.] When they discover that he has escaped into his bathtub home, they literally foam at the mouth! The action then switches to one of their neighbors, a good-looking youth named Brian (Rick Herbst) who wakes one day to suddenly find himself the recipient of wild hallucinations and a fresh puncture wound on the back of his neck. After a routine search of the apartment, he finally encounters the culprit—a centuries-old, ed-like creature called Elmer who offers the youth a deal in exchange for a fluid which will create instant euphoric visions. All Brian has to do is keep Elmer supplied with his favorite food source—human

All of this Eatling of the Minds stuff wouldn't be half as fun as it is if it

weren't for Elmer, a Tingler-takes-up creation which is eight years away from the Philibury-Doughboy-meets-a-roto-rooter look, which was essential to Bellal's appearance in *CASE*. FX artists Gabe Burtlos and Dave Kindlon have come up with an imaginative design which is in keeping with the movie's low-life comedy angles. Resembling a leftover prop from an aborted early David Cronenberg project [*THEY CAME TO TAKE A TRIP?*], Elmer with his goofy Saturday morning cartoon peeps, no-type-overbite and mellow tones is a shoe-in nominee for the Golden Face Hugger Award for Best Comic Performance by a Parasite in a Low-Budget Production. The all-singing, all-dancing body-hopping monster is a natural huckster and minuscule Mephistopheles with his own gloopy charm. No matter if he's coming Brian into taking him on another murderous foray: "Hey, Brian, why don't we steal a Cadillac and pick up some hookers? I could eat a hundred of 'em!" Or, as he and Brian are locked in a battle of wits in the last half, breaking into a chirpy rendition of his signature tune, Tommy Dooley's '60s hit, "Elmer's Tune," Elmer, like Bellal, is a delightfully off-center addition to the ranks of movie monsters.



And, like Bellal, Elmer always delivers the goods in the gore department. Hennelotter never disappoints when it comes to Elmer's tripping-and-preparation approach to a *Night On The Town*. Hennelotter, who basically follows mentor H.G. Lewis' rule of thumb in film (well, gee, you just point the camera and let it run...and run...and run...), can be relied on to film the carnage in the same old dead-on, unfancy style. He doesn't miss a single wiggle of Elmer's gore-bejeweled tail whenever the monster goes into his brain-burrowing routine. Yup, lots of people in *BRAIN DAMAGE* end up giving Elmer a piece of their mind, you can bet on that. And since we are talking about the movie's gore, your humble reviewer feels compelled to fill you in on something you grushounds won't see when the R-rated version of the movie hits the cinemas. In a scene reminiscent of Barbara Crampton fending off the randy severed head in *RE-ANIMATOR*, a punkette, whom the drugged-out Brian has picked up from a disco (appro-



privately named "Hell"), is about to fellate the half-conscious youth only to have Elmer fly out of the boy's pants and slam into her mouth. And don't think the rest of this happens off screen, cause you obviously haven't seen a Frank Henenlotter film. We get some interminable shots of shredding limbs until Elmer (giving new meaning to the term "teff her brains out") slithers back into Brian's open fly, dragging a few stray coils with him. Can't you just hear Fulci letting out a loud "Mamma Mia!" from the back rows? Without a doubt, the sequence stands as one of the most gut-chillingly surreal and grisly moments in splatterdom's history. There's also a nifty dream scene which may or may not make it into the R-version in which Brian imagines himself interrupting a ménage à trois between he, his brother, and unfaithful girlfriend by ripping chunks out of the latter's skull. Though the omission of the punkster's death is understandable, what is totally unmerited is the cutting of Brian's cold turkey nightmare where he envisions himself yanking yards of viscera from his ear only to have it end in an *EVIL DEAD*-type geyser of blood. The scene is an integral piece of action, showing us just how deep Brian's dependence on Elmer's "injections" is. The reason for removing this plot detail (if there is a reason) is baffling to say the least; it makes one wonder just where the Ratings Board's head (uh, sorry) is at these days.

Thankfully, there's more on Henenlotter's mind (uh, sorry again, folks) than just making certain that other people lose theirs. Aside from the usual mix of gonzo horror typical of the director's fare (lines like "Are you out of your mind?" abound and, at one point, the hero tells his overly curious girlfriend, "Look, one brain's just like another!"), *BRAIN DAMAGE* takes off whenever it concentrates on its "Just Say No" subtext. It is profoundly disturbing when we get close-ups of Elmer's needle-like projection soaking Brian's perverted pons, or Brian begging Elmer for "another hit" like a righteous junky. (We also get numerous reactions from Brian's girlfriend and brother to the youth's aberrant behavior.) But things go from the merely disturbing to the horrific when we watch Brian shaking and breaking out in a cold sweat

like any addict going through withdrawal. The connotation, oddly enough, of drugs and regular chili is a heady brew here, and makes one wonder what Henenlotter could accomplish with a bigger budget. (*BRAIN DAMAGE* is in the \$1.6 million range, which, meager that it may be, is an improvement over the frayed shoestring of *CASE*.)

The drug fantasies, which vary in overall style and content, include the surreal, terrific opening trip where Brian visualizes his apartment turning into a blue-tinted watery swamp, while his overhead light transforms into a strobile-like eye; and the all-systems-go goes-out such as the hysterically funny restaurant sequence as Brian tries to tell his girlfriend about his newly "heightened perception" while trying to ignore the meatballs in his spaghetti dinner, which are changing one by one into miniature pulsating brains. There's also the

mesmerizing shot at the end where one of the main characters, after getting an overdose of Elmer's juice, has his skull turned into a lantern. (Peter Kuran contributed the opticals and their addition goes far in embellishing the trip sequences.)

All in all, it's quite a departure from seeing Michael J. Fox in studio-processed fodder like *BRIGHT LIGHTS, BIG CITY* reacting to drug addiction as if he were suffering a minor hangover after a night with the yips in the fast lane.

Of course, the star of the movie is Elmer; and *BRAIN DAMAGE* always kicks into high gear whenever his insouciant presence is on hand. He's an Audrey II for the abstinence-minded '80s, leading the young protagonist into a no-exit night world of depravity and murder. He's every bit as multifaceted as *CASE*'s Belial and just as resourceful. Like the basket-bound



Belial, Elmer really gets around surprisingly well when it comes to looking for unwilling donors. And, in his own way, he's actually rather fair in his dealings with current host Brian. He's really sincere when he tells the youth, after the latter complains of his loss of memory after their nocturnal "walks," that it's his duty to spare Brian "any unpleasantness." It's only when Brian, discovering Elmer's unsavory culinary habits, tries to change the rules of the game, that Elmer turns nasty. Along with his indefatigable sense of humor ("I'm little under done," he quips before diving back into one victim's sorry brain-pie) and those eyes (!), we come to know and love this little slug-cum-pushover can man for a very special reason. Unlike the rest of the characters in BRAIN DAMAGE whose noggins are already as empty as Fawn Hall's gun (how the hell can Martha and Morris, eager to get their pet back and starting to deteriorate via Elmer-cold-turkey, think of grappling with him unarmed?), Elmer is intelligent and fiercely independent to boot. It's great when, wearying of Martha and Morris' restraints, Elmer just bugs out and leaves them without their "stash" and hooks up with Brian.

But, of course, Belial and Elmer are two of splatterdom's finest mooks because of one simple fact—they get the job done! Belial and Elmer may be diminutive spuds, but when they leap into gory action, they really come into their own.

So, let's go easy on Frank Henenlotter. His camera virtuosity may never reach beyond idol Lewis' "If it bleeds, film it," method, and he may never write a believable piece of dialogue or provide us with a truly interesting female character (Barbara in DAMAGE could be the sister of CASE's Sharon), but why should he have to? In the tiny body of work he's put out (if he keeps making movies every six years, he's going to become the Kubrick of the Splatter Genre), he's already given us two of movie monstrosity's quirkiest and most entertaining creatures.

And, you don't need a parasite on the back of your neck to tell you that.

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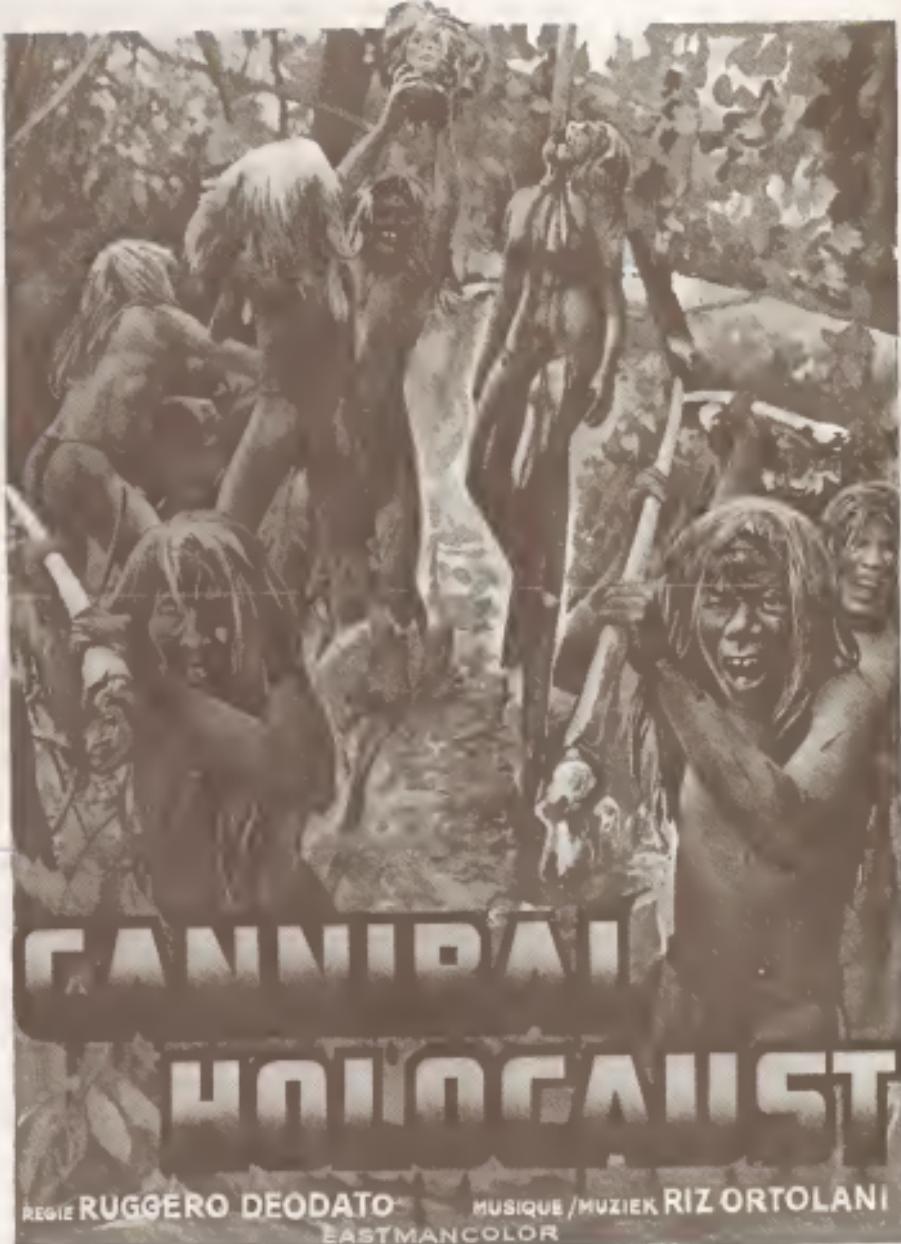
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THE LAST CANNIBAL FILM

You'll Ever Need To See

BY CHAS. BALUN

Here is a film of unrelenting intensity, filled with savage imagery, frightening juxtapositions, and probably more downright meanness than you'll find in any dozen others of its kind. Not certainly a film that not only lives up to its reputation, but easily surprises it. It is one of the most disturbing, challenging, yet frustrating films you'll ever see on your sojourn to uncover the "ultimate cannibal film." This, my friends, may well be it.

Made three years after *THE LAST CANNIBAL WORLD* (1976) [aka *THE LAST SURVIVOR*, *ULTIMO MONDE CANNIBALE*, released in the U.S. in a truncated form as *JUNGLE HOLOCAUST*], Ruggiero Deodato's *CANNIBAL HOLOCAUST* (1979) should make even the most thick-skinned, jaded, seen-it-all girehounds cry "uncle." Just about every cannibal atrocity you'd ever want to see is here. In fact, it's served up with such obvious relish, such gusto, and in such huge shovelfuls, that you just might begin to wonder what attracted you to such films in the first place. *CANNIBAL HOLOCAUST* may well prove to be My Last Cannibal Film. And, it's not just the cavalier attitude towards animal slaughter that makes this film very difficult to enjoy on any level; it's the persistent, lip-smacking cynicism and sadistic world view this movie embraces.

Deodato's film won few fans or admirers during its initial release, and one month after it appeared in Milan, Italy, it was seized through a judicial order, sequestered, and then declared obscene by the high court. Deodato has said that it took three years to be released uncut, and then, one month later, the negatives were burned in a fire of suspicious origin. Even when the film



was finally released, it received only spotty distribution due to the "realism" of the "effects work" and the fact that not everyone was convinced they were, indeed, "special effects."

Lamberto (GEMONS, MACABRO) Bava is credited as one of the many assistant directors of the film; he has steadfastly refused comment about the verisimilitude of the alleged "special effects" work. Indeed, this film is almost too real for comfort.

The credits come up over calm, even seductively-orchestrated theme music, aerial views of the Amazon jungle roll out before you in deceptively

beautiful motifs of primordial splendor. Before all this, though, a subtle and veiled warning: "For the sake of authenticity, some scenes have been retained in their entirety."

It doesn't take long for the film to deliver its first gut punch. A rescue team, dispatched from New York to find a team of documentarians presumed lost in Amazonia, stumbles upon the first of the many truly unsettling scenes involving sexual violence. A lone cannibal is dragging a woman through the mud, after which he ties her spread-eagled to a couple of stakes and rapes her repeatedly with what appears to be a stone or wood dildo. He then gathers a pile of mud, littered with sharpened stones, and shoves it up her you-know-what. Before one of our great white hunters can interfere with what is described as "a ritualistic tribal punishment for adultery," the cannibal dude brains his wife repeatedly with the dildo until she's dead as dirt.

You know by now this film won't be pulling its punches. They're not fooling around, they plan to sucker punch your teeth down your throat and eat your ass. Ninety minutes later, you're nearly convinced they've done just that.

After your requisite animal butchery, filmed up close and personal in

NACKT UND ZERFLEISCHT

Cannibal Massaker
Version S



Lingering, loving detail, the rescue party makes its way to the cannibal's village and is invited to their campfire for songs, skits, and some barbecue'd guts-on-a-stick. Eventually, the Great Whites offer the cannibal chieftain a tape recorder in exchange for several canisters of film. Of course, it's the last filmic evidence of the doomed party that preceded them. It's here where the going begins to get rough.

The film is flown back to New York where the rescue party begins to assemble the footage in hopes of presenting their own documentary on what really happened to the previous expedition. What follows, with its scratches, jumps, awkward zooms, and hand-held immediacy, is as close as you're ever likely to get to what a real "muff" film would be like. This is troubling stuff, indeed.

The "found footage" shows the filmmakers to be smug, snotty, spoiled, and sporting a mean streak about a foot wide and manow deep. Right

"Jesus! I swear, you'll consider sexuel stuprancy and vegetarianism both after seeing through this one."

away, they're shown dragging a huge turtle to shore, which they summarily beat and gleefully rip apart in excruciating close-up, clowning and mugging for the camera incessantly in their best "bad boy" poses. Incidentally, this scene is a four-big-chunk blower, so for God's sake, keep the attacks at bay for awhile. It doesn't help, either, seeing various members of the film crew toy their cookies in cinema verité style—once again, up close and very personal.

A token point should be made here concerning the patently offensive scenes involving real animal mutilation and killings. Deodato has shrugged off criticism in the past with a flippancy, "All these animals would be eaten by their owners anyway." Yeah, maybe, but probably not in ways that allow the animal to die slowly, painfully, and under the best photographic conditions available. A particularly sickening, totally gratuitous, unnecessary sequence has one of the cocksure dickheads shooting a tied-up pig, after they terrorize the villages. He simply blasts it with his rifle and leaves it dazed, screaming and kicking in the mud. Some fun, huh?

Being a cannibale as well as an editor of a magazine that wallows in simulated death and mutilation puts me on morally shaky ground to begin a polemic/diatribe on animal rights... But, fuck it, that's never stopped me before.

We need to re-examine both the necessity and motivation behind staging actual killings for *entertainment* and profit purposes only. Isn't that what contemporary, commercial filmmaking is all about? Or am I missing something here? And, why should we excuse a filmmaker who is unable to sustain mood, pacing, or viewer interest and must resort to kicking you repeatedly in the nuts to get your attention? Deodato is no hack director; he's been involved in over 70 productions and knows exactly what he's doing. Sprinkled liberally throughout CANNIBAL HOLOCAUST are both scenes of breathtaking beauty and piss-your-pants terror. Both moods were evoked effectively without resorting to his grab-bag of mondo tricks which sometimes come completely out of nowhere—though roughly confounding the viewer. Yol Dude! Watch this monkey get his skull split open by machete and the brains eaten! Wowee! Check out this muskrat with a hunting knife through his gut and out the top of his head! He's squealing and thrashing like it really hurts...bad! Oh, boy! He's not dead yet, either; gotta stick 'em again and twist it! Oh, oh! His eyes are rolling back white now, ready for that death rattle? Whatta show! Get my point?

Besides the geek show theatrics of Deodato's slaughtering of animals, there

is another facet of this film which is equally offensive and no less morally repugnant. The jolting juxtapositioning of numerous disturbing sequences featuring violence, death, and sex is enough to almost make you wish you'd rented OLD YELLER instead.

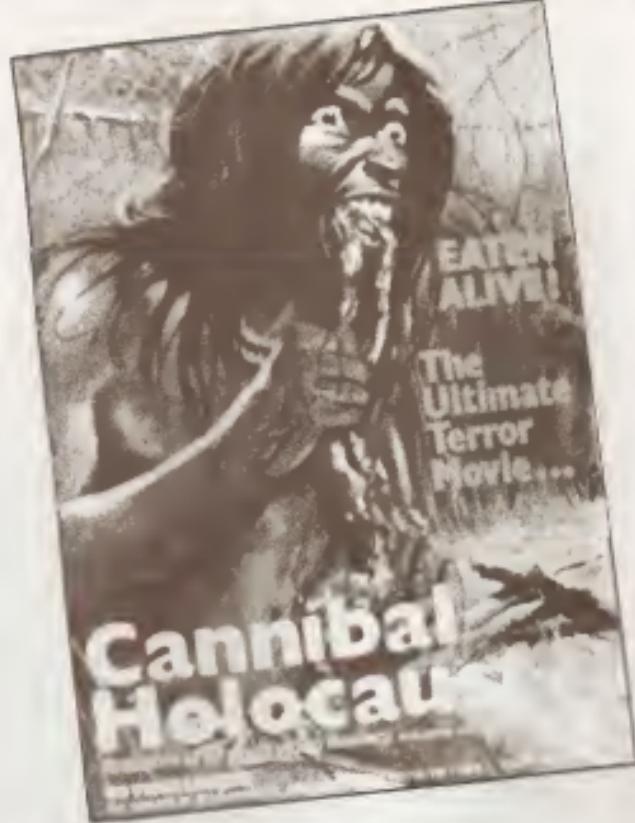
There seems to be such a hateful, cruel, and misanthropic point of view at work here sometimes, that I'm relatively sure you'll want to shower after viewing this film. How do you react to a sequence involving the torching of the natives' village, trapping women and children in the flames as the thrill-happy "documentarian" films their agony and exclaim, "Beautiful! It's beautiful!" This is followed immediately by some rough-and-tumble sex, bordering on rape that, of course, is being filmed by another of their party. They do it in front of the captured cannibals and make their own jungle porn home movie. Now, isn't that special?

The sexual violence motif is woven throughout CANNIBAL HOLOCAUST and climaxes (oops!) with a series of vicious gangbangs, followed by the now obligatory penis amputation. Jezeb! I swear, you'll consider sexual abstinence and vegetariansism both, after sitting through this one.

Deodato usually follows a particularly nasty abructly with some two-bit bullshit philosophizing to the tune of "Who are the real savages?" and unconvincing bleatings about "the wanton exploitation of the natives" when he is doing just that. The film seems to be constantly apologizing for itself, seeking justification and, presumably, attempting to secure some sort of falsely superior moral positioning.

When a previous documentary called THE LAST ROAD TO HELL is screened for the rescue party and its investors, half a dozen harrowingly real executions are quickly dismissed as "soldiers paid to act" and "they were all faked." They sure don't all look too bogus, though, lots of the executionees were either extremely accomplished method actors or else really scared shitless.

Producers of these mondo documentaries have often been accused of



"orchestrating" a genuine execution to mesh with their production schedules. The makers of AFRICA, BLOOD AND GUTS (AFRICA ADDIO, 1967) were held suspect when their documentando showed various scenes of soldiers summarily shooting prisoners right on the spot, in footage that seemed a little too realistic for some anxious distributors.

The ultimate obscenity to all this comes much further on down the road and right into the home of the video consumer. Rening terms like this and FACES OF DEATH, etcetera, for as little as 88 cents apiece, and, once home, amidst the beer, hooters and pretzels, fast forwarding past all the "padding" to get right to the meat of it. Death. Suffering. You wanna see

'em squirm. You wanna Make Them Die Slowly, painfully, and entertainingly and *luz for you* and your buddies! Over and over again, too, if ya like! Jesus, ain't life grand!

Okay. I'll put my little moral guardian guic away for just now and get on with cataloguing the other juicy stuff that falls comfortably within the realm of "movie mayhem," FX trickery, and deceptive camera work. Lest we forget now, this is the one that features the infamous aboriginal abortion and foetus-in-the-mud sequence. (Hey, relax, mom and baby are doing fine and are in for a percentage of the video sales.)

Besides the usual spearings, stablings, blowdarts assaults, and gut

pulling, a particularly grisly scene, reminiscent of *DAY OF THE DEAD*, proves the illusion is hardly less disturbing than the real McCoy. When their Phillipine guide falls prey to an infected leg, they hack it off with a machete and cauterize the wound just like Savini and the boys did, and just as effectively.

The grand cannibal munchdown is saved for last and is, indeed, an extremely powerful, frightening climax as each member of the party is brought down

on many of the posters and presents one of the most hauntingly ugly visions ever to grace a frame of film. After the original party gang rapes a carefree girl in the mud (a sequence of such unmitigated ferocity and equal in every respect to the prolonged, mauling assault in *I SPIT ON YOUR GRAVE*), they come upon a clearing and discover a most hideously unique jungle display of lethal punishment. A young girl has been impaled on an immense, sharpened spike and left suspended several feet in the air. Yep, it's up

point to all the violent sensationalism is the fact that some of the images that linger long afterwards had nothing to do with explicit material. Many of the hand-held cinema verité style camera shots that lend such an immediacy to the action also echo the frantic disorientating fear quickly enveloping the film crew. "We're screwed, we're trapped. We don't know where we are anymore," they shout. Then suddenly realize, "Christ! They're all around us!" Truly scary stuff and the kind of primal fear manipulated so effectively in early



German title card. They're understandably reticent about using the word "Zerfleisch" in regards toExplorers Film, n'est pas?

and decapitated. Right up to the very last man, they continue filming until the cameraman is attacked and falls, his own death throes being recorded and his bloodied face and fixed stare filling the final frames in what appears to be a grotesque parallel to Michael Powell's notorious *PEEPING TOM* (1964). Bodies are hacked apart, entrails raised in celebration, heads tossed about, dicks sliced off, eyes gouged out. You know, all the usual stuff.

There is one other undeniably twisted mutilation scene which must be mentioned here because it's showcased

her ass and cut her mouth and, believe me, it's a chilling, sickening visage. You begin to pray that it's just a dummy, just a dummy. Unfortunately, rumours were spread by some crew members while others maintained a stoic silence about exactly how this scene came to be. Some say the girl was found like that, by accident, and they simply filmed what the natives had just abandoned.

Suffice to say, this film is a powerhouse of visceral gut punches and you'd best come prepared to be profoundly disturbed. As a rather ironic counter-

cannibal-infested epic like John Farrow's *FIVE CAME BACK* (1939). (Farrow's early effort was suspenseful and dramatic enough to warrant a remake, made 17 years later by the same director as *BACK FROM ETERNITY* (1955).

Deodato can be a very gifted filmmaker on occasion and one can never fault the guy for coping out on you or taking the easy way out. His films retain a vitality, a rawness that is rarely captured in films of this subgenre. Deodato obviously goes to great pains to portray Amazonia as authen-

tically as possible. In fact, in a recent French genre magazine, Deodato was asked what he thought of Umberto Lenzi's *CANNIBAL FEROX* (1981) and he replied, "I hate it. When I make a movie about these natives, I go to the places they live, though the climate is often horrible and filming is difficult. Now, that guy ripped me off, shooting his movie in some Italian forest."

Some of the mise-en-scenes in *CANNIBAL HOLOCAUST*, especially the hellishly surreal campfire sequence where the cannibals are stacked in tiers, grunting, squawking, and swaying in the

gut-blackened smoke, attest to Deodato's power as a visionary director. But this film is filled with such dishonesty, spine, and cruelty, that its persistent mean-spiritedness only serves to sabotage the flimsy and ever-shifting cockeyed moral stance the film foolishly attempts to maintain.

CANNIBAL HOLOCAUST is a film to be reckoned with. It incites to riot—both emotionally and philosophically. It forces us to uncover some very real and conflicting passions, vexatious thoughts and ideas, and a way of living and dying that may appear grotesque

and repulsive, but, in essence, will always remain a frighteningly REAL paradigm of Darwinian thought. The Law of the Jungle ultimately rules us all, like it or lump it. It's beyond a studied, rational approach and far from our whiny, petty bourgeois moralizing. The Law plays for keeps and takes NO prisoners.

You've been warned. *CANNIBAL HOLOCAUST* looks you straight in the eye, kicks you in the balls, then makes you lick up your own vomit.

Go get 'em, tough guy.



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BY DENNIS DANIEL



With Photographs

By
K. S. KOLBERT
And
KAREN OGLE
From The
ROY FRUMKES
Collection

Our story begins in the downstairs den of one Nathan Schiff, a recent acquaintance of ours, who is a lover of horror and science fiction films. Nathan is one of those lucky guys who has all the "right connections" when it comes to collecting obscure movies on videotape. Over the years, he has wrangled scores upon scores of juicy, rare, "how the fuck did you get that?" videos in his little den of doom. Just waiting to show guys like me his collection because I'm one of the few people on Earth who gives a shit that he has the uncut, original Japanese version of GODZILLA...sic...sic...

As I feasted my eyes on this video banquet of the bizarre, I beheld such wonderful seldom-seen titles as THE H MAN, THE TERROR BENEATH THE SEA, THE EXOTIC ONES, THE LAST HOUSE ON DEAD END STREET, THE UNDERTAKER AND HIS PALS...and a curious title I had heard of but never thought anyone would own...DOCUMENT OF THE DEAD!

"Nathan," I wheezed, "Surely, this can't be the infamous documentary about the making of DAWN OF THE DEAD!"

"It most certainly is," he smiled.

Dig in, splatter fans. The finest acetylene tank disintegration ever seen on film.



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In no uncertain terms, I made it very clear to Nathan that if he wouldn't let me borrow the tape, I would disembowel myself right before his eyes! He lent it to me.

The absolute minute I got home, the tape was thrust into my VCR at 1 am, drooling, wincing with bated breath, to see how a bunch of creative guys from Pittsburgh got together at a shopping mall and cranked out one of the greatest horror films (and sequels) of all time! As the opening credits rolled by, I couldn't help but notice that one man was responsible for the overall conception and execution of the film. The credit read, "Written, Produced and Directed by Roy Frunkes."

I remember thinking, "Roy Frunkes...uhh...that name rings a bell." At the risk of driving myself crazy, I let it go and just lost myself in the documentary.

It was one of the finest I'd ever seen—beautifully crafted, scripted, and shot. With an almost surreal female narration supplied by Andy Warhol favorite, Susan Tyrell. The film contained an unforgettable collection of interviews with everyone from the casting director (John Angliss, star of MARTIN) to Romero himself. We also get to see Romero's creative process at work...both on the set (including a scene where he shows extras how to walk like zombies) and in the editing room. There's

also plenty of never-before-seen stills, footage, and an interesting interview with Tom Savini, conducted while he's making up a zombie. (Who turns out to be...guess who? Roy Frunkes!) This scene includes a high speed version of Savini applying the zombie makeup. The film also covers the business side of independent filmmaking and distribution. All in all, it's an amazing viewing experience that chronicles the filmmaking style and techniques of George Romero, from his early days of advertising right up to DAWN.

The task before me was simple. Find out who the fuck Roy Frunkes is and interview him immediately so all of my DEEP RED brethren can share in his recollections on being an eye witness to history!

I searched through several genre publications to see if I could find any Frunkes clippings. To my utter amazement, I discovered that our boy Roy had served as writer and producer of STREET TRASH! Damn! This guy's done it all!

After a little investigating journalism, several phone calls, and some fact finding, I found myself sitting eyeball to eyeball with Roy in the cluttered living room of his Manhattan digs. Roy is a tall, curly haired, soft-spoken, unassuming looking kinda guy who's been teaching the art of filmmaking at the School of Visual Arts in New York for over a decade. He also has a great laugh! Deep...gutty...inflectional!

Show business has been in Roy's blood from day one. His grandfather, Benny Burke, was a very colorful guy and one of the greatest agents in show business history.

"My grandfather was Houdini's agent," Roy remembers. "As a kid, I loved my grandfather! Actually, I think I'm the only person living who knows how Houdini really died. It's not the way movies and books have told it. The irony of his death is much more powerful than it's been portrayed. He had ruptured his appendix and was in great pain. On the third day, he became delirious and they had to put him in a straitjacket. He regained consciousness just before he died, saw he was in a straitjacket, looked up at his brother sitting at his bedside, and said, 'This is one I'm not getting out of.' Those were his last words."



When Roy was 10, his father bought him a 16mm camera. From the beginning, Roy felt he had a head for film and shot a lot of silent action/hero films using neighborhood talent. He kept at it all through high school and eventually attended college at Tulane University in New Orleans, where he excelled in creative writing. "When in college, I got to meet Norman Jewison and Steve McQueen (who were making *THE CINCINNATI KID*). I made a lot of contacts. I became the entertainment editor of the school newspaper. I was the only one in town that knew anything about film. If it had been New York, I would have been lost; but in New Orleans, I wasn't." So, when I came back from school, even though I didn't major in film, I had made inroads into the industry."

Upon returning to New York, Roy enrolled in New York University's film school for a year. One of Roy's teachers was Harry Hurtwitz. "He and I were working on similar ideas. He was about a projectionist in a movie theatre. Mine was about a gas station attendant. Both of them kinda lost in their fantasies. Harry had already done some shorts so we both dropped out, raised the money, and made *THE PROJECTIONIST* with Rodney Dangerfield."



Man, Myth, Master

Roy and Harry went on to make several other films together—*SHRIEK OUT* (with Judd Hirsch), *AN EVENING AT DANGERFIELDS* and *THE COMEBACK TRAIL* (with Buster Crabbe, Henry Youngman, and Chuck McCann). “*THE COMEBACK TRAIL* is about those two skin-flint producers who have enough money left for one day's shooting, and they hire an old actor to make a comeback, knowing he'll die on the set. We ran out of money and we never finished it, but a cult built up around the movie because people knew it existed.”

As a favor to Buster Crabbe, the president of the lab struck a 16mm print off of a 35mm negative. So, there was never a 16mm negative. Buster would show his print at different shows he was involved with. All of a sudden, this bizarre black comedy was getting a repartee! It's now considered the longest film in production in the U.S. because Harry finally scraped together the money and finished it eleven years later!

Roy's next film project—had it ever reached completion—would have been a motherfucker! It was going to be called *TALES THAT'LL TEAR YOUR HEART OUT* (God! How I love that title!). Roy showed me his still book from the scenes that had been shot and I was in awe!

“Wes Craven directed a sequence,” Roy explained. “It was going to be a multi-thang, you know? A lot of my friends were involved. We had everyone directing sequences—Ernest Tidyman (*THE FRENCH CONNECTION*, *SHAFT*, *HIGH PLAINS DRIFTER*), Al Kasper (created *Bullwhip* and *Underdog*), Chuck Hensch (*GREETINGS, HI, MOM*). It never got finished.”

“Shit, what happened?”

“Just ran out of money. I hoped we would have had enough done to raise the rest. What happened was all the directors wanted to start. So, everyone got started and did about a day's worth of shooting. There wasn't enough of any one sequence to show the overall potential of the finished film. Amazing, right?”

And a damn shame. This film would have been a keeper. (If anyone out there reading is a millionaire, I know a way for you to double your dinero.)



Craven directs his segment from TALES





"There was a scene where Ed Sullivan's corpse comes back starring Sullivan impersonator and look-alike Will Jordan, who had turned down playing Sullivan in a number of films on grounds of bad taste! Yet, he agreed to do his corpse! Pretty wild!" (We both laughed.)

One 25 minutes of film was shot. Believe it or not, you can view some of it about three minutes worth. The producers of DR. BUTCHER, M.D. bought some footage from Roy and used it in the opening credits of the film. In fact, the first zombie you see in DR. B is none other than Roy Frumkes!

Roy's next project had very strange beginnings. "An old former classmate of mine wanted to put up about \$15,000 bucks to do a horror film. Before we were gonna shoot, we said, 'Ah, let's go down to 42nd Street, pick out a horror film, and see what we're gonna take!' We're walking down 42nd and we say, 'Oh, here's one NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD—never heard of that! Let's go see this shit.' Well, after seeing it, we walked out of the theater and said, 'We can't take that! What the fuck's going on in this country!' We almost gave up. If that was what they were doing in low budget, we were in a lot of trouble!"

Can you imagine this? Roy's first experience with NOLD was to see what kind of horror films were being made on low budget so he would know how to do a better job.

"I wish there had been time-lapse photography of our faces in that theater. I don't think we moved! Our smiles

faded...we didn't even look at each other. It blew us away! It was so brilliantly storyboarded, so graphic, so creative...and really scary."

As the years went by, Roy saw NOLD become a classic with a strong cult following. He realized what an achievement this was and decided it might be interesting for his School of Visual Art students, as well as any film students, to see the non-station, independent filmmaking process in action.

"In 1978, I had persuaded the School of Visual Arts to invest in a teaching film, to be shot on the set of a real movie. I decided there were no good teaching films on filmmaking. I knew Romero was getting ready to do DAWN OF THE DEAD. I wrote to him, he knew who I was and said, 'Yes, we'd be delighted to have you on the set!'"

With his six crew members in tow, Roy went to the now famous mall in Pittsburgh to record the making of a classic.

Producer Richard Rubenstein was very protective of Romero and laid down some strict rules for Roy and his crew to follow. Major among them was keeping their distance. "We couldn't get within 100 feet of Romero. So, we went up there with a lot of telephoto lenses. We only had enough money to shoot for two days on location. When we arrived, we discovered, to our shock, that they weren't shooting anything that was in the script. They had already shot the entire script!"

This harrowing situation actually worked to Roy and his crew's advantage. Since the script had already been covered, the documentary crew happened upon a unique and rare creative opportunity. They were given the chance to document Romero's improvisational talents at their un inhibited best. "They were all improvising! Romero was a zombie in a Santa Claus outfit. They were doing a pile fight, there was even talk about a nude bathing scene in the mall fountain; none of these things were in the script! The script was hard-

Frumkes as a real zombie in DAWN OF THE DEAD





Uncle George does DIRTY HARRY



tough...it read like NOLDE. But, things had changed, evolved. The mall itself was too pretty. The times were more pop arty, cartoonish. Romero had decided, wisely, to do something really different during the film's second stage. He evolved himself along with the script."

Romero asked Roy and his associate producer Sooley Raphael if they wanted to be zombies in the film. "My films have always been reflective. They are films about films about films. In THE PROJECTIONIST, a guy is a movie theater sees himself in the movies THE COMEBACK TRAIL...the same thing, a movie crew trying to kill one of the actors who's an old-time film actor. It was a reoccurring theme in my work. So, I jumped at the chance to do a film in which the director was in the film about the film of the filming of the film!" Roy and Sooley appear in the pre-fighting sequence of DAWN. You can't miss Roy; he's the walking dead sucker who takes one slabbing in the kisser, up close, full-screen shot, with a totally expressionless face.

In his efforts to cover everything about the making of DAWN, Roy got in touch with director of photography, Michael Gornick, to see if he could document on film Romero during the editing process. "I called Gornick and said, 'Look, can I send you a 400-foot role of film for you to shoot 11 min. of George in the editing room?' And he said, 'Sure, I'll do it.' Now, George was under heavy time constraints; he was really up against it, editing like mad. On top of that, he wasn't feeling well. (His illness was due to his driving himself day and night to get the job done.) So, I knew I was imposing on him, but Michael said he'd try to film whatever he could. The negative comes down, we process it, make a print, we run it, and we see George cutting the pie scene with me! It was so gesticuous of him."

In the end, Roy received much more than he bargained for. So do we as viewers of the documentary. When you really think about it, Romero's sense of commitment and cooperation with Roy's film is astounding. "George had that pie scene cut a few different ways. He had one cut where the pie hits my face, then he cut to a montage of zombies being hit." In the final version, the pie hits Roy, we linger on his tabula rasa expression, then the pie

slowly falls off, thus transforming the scene into a memorable visual gag. "It showed me what 24 frames could do. George was nice enough to pull it off the long way and make it the copper gag on the scene."

Roy was allowed to use scenes from the original three-hour version of DAWN, giving many viewers of his film the delight of seeing scenes that eventually were cut from the final print. With all of this treasured footage in hand, Roy set out creating his DOCUMENT OF THE DEAD. He broke down the film into three separate "acts." Pre-Production (introducing the principals involved), Production (which is the ones, everything goes wrong that can), and Post-Production (the happy resolution). He even wrote his own script to follow. "I knew I was going to be writing the script after the shoot (which is the way it's done with documentaries) but you still have to go in with a plan. Who's the main character? Romero. Who are the major characters? Savist, Gomick, Rubenstein. And I made up charts for my two camera people. I needed ten close-ups of Romero, ten medians, ten longs from each one so I had enough special design to cut a movie with.



Romero shows us how to "walk like a [dead]man."





There's a wonderful shot of someone following Romero down a flight of stairs, walking towards the set. I asked Roy how they achieved this when they weren't allowed to be closer than 100 feet to him. "Our director of photography, Reeves Lehman, had been a special forces guy in Nam and he was used to real military tactics. He took the group of us, I stayed back on walkie talkie, and they went belly to the ground, across the mall, right towards Romero. Of course, you know that DAWN is, in some ways, a war film disguised as a horror film and Romero loves war stuff (*THE CRAZIES, DAY OF THE DEAD*). He noticed us out of the corner of his eye, he smiled. It seems he enjoyed our little 'hit-and-run' tactics and he took down the veil. We no longer were constrained to just 100 feet." Lucky for Roy (and us) this took place after the documentary crew had been there for only two hours. So, we really get an up-close view of Romero in action. Not to mention all the in-depth interviews with Romero, Savin, Rubenstein, Gornick, actors Scott Reiniger (Roger), Ken Foree (Peter) and David



Erge ("Fly Boy," who's interviewed in his zombie makeup with Savins working on extras in the background), John Ampias (costing), and the lighting director Carl Augenstein. Even the opening and closing title sequences are a knockout!

Okay, I know what you're all thinking. "Enough of this cock-tease, Daniel, where can we see this fuckin' thing?" Well, after ten years of obscurity, things look very optimistic for DOCUMENT OF THE DEAD's eventual release on videotape. As always, DEEP RED will keep you up-to-date.

Which brings us to STREET TRASH, a film that is available on video and a "must see!" I loved STREET TRASH for many reasons: It's original, it's episodic, it's got some terrific, bizarre, never-before-done gory FX, and, most of all, it's fun! If you haven't seen it yet, put down the magazine, rush to your local video shop, and demand a copy. You must view this radical, groundbreaking novelty immediately! (For a complete overview of the originality and gory of STREET TRASH, see Chaz Batus's sidebar on page 31.)

STREET TRASH began as a 16mm short about winos who melt when they drink bad wine; written, produced, and directed by one of Roy's film students, Jen Muro, with help from its star, Mike Lackey. It received a lot of exposure at New York City nightclubs and non-commercial venues, where it developed a reputation.

After receiving all kinds of offers to turn the film into a feature, 19-year-old Jim decided to ask Roy to get involved and write a screenplay. "The short was tied together by the various melts that took place after the winos drank their cheap hooch. There was no cop, no waitress, no collision shop owner. I started making all of the melts happen, fleshing out the film. There were a number of characters that I wanted to bring to the film and Janney wanted some of the characters he created to remain. So, we ended up with a lot of characters!"

The film is very experimental in its non-linear quality. It does not truly focus on one specific character. Rather, it tells short stories about many of them. Sort of a "B&W Street Trash," as Roy puts it.



One of the elements that makes STREET TRASH enjoyable is the creative lighting and photography, especially the Steadicam shots employed by director Muro. "Janney made the film like a textbook," Roy explains. "He was looking for a career in Steadicam work. He used every kind of shot he could think of, including a 360 degree turn."

Of course, the major highlights of the film are the wino meltdown FX, created by Jennifer Aspenall and her crew. The winos melt in so many different colors it looks like Walt Disney threw up all over them. It's also inter-

esting to note that as soon as they drink the "Viper," the meltdowns begin. No waiting. No Jekyll and Hyde theatrics. One sip, bang—a living color monitor! Every meltdown is different. Scars are even left up to the imagination. "Audiences really appreciate that," Roy feels. "They may not remember it in those terms, but I can tell they appreciate being shown stuff by inference. That they weren't being shown the same thing every time mattered to them."

As was to be expected, the entire production did not run as smooth as a

fiss-toothed comb. Roy remembers, "The Steadicam shot that runs through the junkyard up to the toilet seat was in the storyboards. When I conceived it, it was just going straight. When we actually were in the yard, Jimmy decided he wanted this super elaborate shot, using the Steadicam. It took a whole day to shoot and then, the horrible thing was, the doorway to the bathroom toilet set was narrow and Jimmy walked through the door and he totallyd the damn equipment! He wiped out his Steadicam, this camera worth many thousands of dollars, as a crew of 55 people stared at him. It was a Friday, so we amounted the camera to the Steadicam repair shop in California. They worked on it 48 hours and got it back to us by Tuesday morning. We only lost one day!"

At this point in our talk, the door buzzer rang and, to my surprise and delight, in stepped the wimette herself, actress Nicole Potter. She was so convincing in her portrayal of a lowlife, unashamed, alcohol-soaked, sex-crazed bitch that I was stunned to see her so plain and proper in the flesh. She explained how she truly enjoyed the chance to play such a weird, f**ked-up part. "I really thought it was the kind of part I could get into. I mean, how many chances do you ever get to play a role like that on stage? Usually they tell actresses to tone it down. Here, I had to do the exact opposite!"

Which leads me into another important point to be made. *STREET TRASH* basically contains a group of

unfamiliar actors and actresses, thus adding to the believability of the story. The wimmes talk wimess, so to speak. An example of this is when the old wim goes into the liquor store and gives this rambling, alcohol-induced speech about the meaning of life. Actor Bill Chapl, who plays the cop, was once a real cop, so he adds a lot of believability to his role. Vic Noto, who plays ex-Vietnam vet Bronson, wrote a lot of his own rambling dialogue when he has his 'Nam flashbacks. Both Roy and Jim were very open to the cast's and crew's suggestions, in the tradition of all low-budget independent film team efforts.

Roy Franks enjoys making independent films. He refuses to join the mainstream film industry due to its many creative restrictions. "I don't like the union restrictions. I don't like extras not being allowed to eat with the stars. I've always resented the way they make films. When I was young, my parents had many connections in the industry and I wouldn't go out there (Hollywood). I don't think I ever will, although I'd be glad to sell my stuff. I really like the whole family situation of independent filmmaking. It's a wonderful team effort experience. The filmmaking itself is the art. The distributors and the exhibition are our enemies. They can't stand us! And when it goes over the negotiating table, they'll try to undercut every artistic finger we have in the pie. And if they put up the money, the creative assassination starts from day one. People like Wes Craven have found that out. They are at all the rushes, they're on the set saying 'fix my up!' So, you're one and only shot at doing anything that's aesthetically pleasing is during production. And, in the case of *STREET TRASH*, we did it exactly the way we wanted it. Unfortunately, when we sold it to Vertigo, they cut ten minutes out of it. But, at least we made it the way we wanted it. That's the same way Romero feels. Make it the way you want it. Then, even if they cut it, they don't, hopefully, totally destroy what you've done. If you start with them, though, they destroy it from the beginning."

Roy does not wish to join the ranks of Tobe Hooper, John Carpenter, and the like who have had to compromise their creative vision in order to work for shushole film companies like Cannon, DeLaurentiis, and many of the



J.W. explosion. Wolf says.



Nicole Fetter gives good eye

majors. He refuses to make that mistake. This attitude is commendable, but it also puts his film in great peril. In order for them to be seen, they must be distributed. When Roy showed STREET TRASH around, the reaction was overall less than enthusiastic. "Everyone felt it was a film you would never forget, but most were afraid to touch it. They worry about the rating, how to merchandise it properly." Lucky for Roy, he bumped into David Whitman who was head of publicity at Vestron's Lightning Division. David was involved in the creation of some classic ad campaigns like "Just Keep Repeating...It's Only A Movie" for LAST HOUSE ON THE LEFT. He also created the beef-bag campaign for MARK OF THE DEVIL. He saw STREET TRASH at the premier at the Ziegfeld in New York. He loved the film and insisted Vestron buy it.

We need more people in the film industry like Roy Franken. Why? He is one of us. He loves film with all his heart and is willing to sacrifice anything (except the investors' money) to bring his unique visions, and those of his collaborators, to the screen. In DOCUMENT OF THE DEAD, he celebrates the art of Georges Romer. He brings



Director Jim Muro



Very rare shot of Groom's despiration

Jennifer Aspasia's radio controlled herd





The STREET TRASH cast. Marcus all

Mung doing a voodoo shot with smoke



dignity to the much-maligned horror genre. In STREET TRASH, he celebrates his independence to think, create, make his and his partners' dreams come true. For love my friends! Love! Along the way, he hopes to make a profit as well. (He's no dummy.) So, the next time you see the name Roy Franken attached to any production, you'll know that it will be as pure and honest as a film could be.

Thank you, Roy. We're behind you. Keep up the good work and dazzling the Brang shat out of us for years to come. You are one nice bird.

In the gutter with...

STREET TRASH

Before setting readers adrift in a formidable sea of hyperbole, metaphor, and genre postulation, allow me this one last, critical allegation: STREET TRASH is certainly not a film above reproach. Why, for one thing, the guys and gals playing the winos and derelicts have cosmetically correct teeth-way too white and pretty. The other critical point to be made escapes me for right now.

STREET TRASH is one of the freshest, most inventive, swaggering coockie splatter films since RE-ANIMATOR. This movie has an ATTITUDE and fuck you if you can't take it.

Jim Mure's direction is consistently engrossing and, at times, even astonishing. He nimbly sidesteps the genre's clichés and re-invents new territory where few have gone before. The snaky, whip-likesteadcam work and field tracking shots, coupled with the skewed camera angles and fanciful lighting, give the film a weirdly unique lushness not usually found within the ranks of the Gutternipple Film Corps. The well-tended production values, uniformly good performances, and spectacular makeup FX at times threaten to obfuscate the film's true intented, which are subversive, blasphemous, sexually perverse, and apparently bent on undermining our present social order. And, thank God for that.

This film makes no attempt to passayfoot round the taboos and it attacks your senses with unparalleled

fury, reigning blows of equal force to your gonads, brains, and funnybone. The totally vulgar, renegade script is lovingly offensive in all the right ways. Rarely has a film captured the inherent whimsy and humor in such formerly unfunny topics as necrophilia, castration, alcoholism, psychopathology, and sexual deviancy. But this one does. If you don't hawp when the wine's dick gets sliced off and tossed around the junkyard, spinning end over ragged end just like Kubrick's famous shot in 2001, well then, you must be dead or worse...Catholic.

The oftentimes hilariously ribald dialog is peppered with throwaway lines like "Hey, how 'bout 68? You blow me and I owe you one." There are more fucks, shits, pisses, cunts, pricks, cock-



suckers, and motherfuckers than you've heard since those 483 bikers simultaneously caught their dicks in their zippers during a beer blast on a run to Tempe, Arizona, back in '67.

The plot, in itself, is merely a simple triggering device, allowing the filmmakers, actors, and FX technicians a wide canvas on which to create this exhilarating, misanthropic little masterpiece. A mouthy, lard-butti store owner finds a case of Temafly Viper hidden away in a storeroom and begins selling it to the local denizens for a buck a bottle. They drink it. They fall down. They melt. No problem.

In addition to the finest decapitation-by-acetlene-torch sequence ever witnessed, this sick ol' fuck of a movie also showcases the meatiest, chunkiest exploding body gag since...uh, help me with this one...no, not Cassavetes in THE FLIRY, not even close. Think 400 pounds of wonderfully photogenic, big-beefy chunks o' plenty showering this alley with more guts than you'll see in two or three dozen other splatter movies combined. How can one help but be profoundly moved by this?

Look. Check it out. If it's not all that I've said it was, then I'll eat this fucking magazine.

I mean it.



10



REMEMBERING BORIS

Academy of Motion Picture Arts & Sciences Tribute

BY KRIS GILPIN

The Academy (of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences) Theatre in L.A. was packed the night of Monday, January 18, 1988, for a special tribute to the late, great actor Boris Karloff. Excerpts from 17 Karloff classics were screened, along with rousing commentary and panel discussions by some of B.K.'s cinematic comrades (all of whom became his friends after working with him). The audience was comprised of industry folks, celebrities, and fans at an incredibly cheap fee of \$5 for general admission/\$2 for Academy members.

The evening began with a clip of Basil Rathbone pulling a monstrous B.K. out of a hole in the floor of the laboratory from *Son of Frankenstein*. The crowd gave the honored Karloff a warm round of applause on first sight, as they also did for Bela Lugosi, on view in the clip as the deformed Ygor. With video casters in the back of the auditorium, it was the perfect way to get the proceedings started.

The first welcoming remarks of the evening were given by director Robert (The Day the Earth Stood Still, The War Wagon) Wise, who stepped up to the microphones podium, stage left.

"Although he declined to play the role again (after this film), in the minds of successive generations of filmmakers, Karloff and the monster have continued to be inextricably linked," he said. "Tonight, however, we are here to honor a true professional who applied his considerable skills, sensitivity, innate generosity, and humor to a remarkable number of varied roles, both on-screen and off. For on film, stage, and television, and in his private life, Boris Karloff showed us something about ourselves and this thing we call The Human Condition."

Wise then spoke of *The Body Snatcher*, a fine film starring B.K. and Lugosi, which was the director's "third effort, B.M.'s 68th film since the introduction of sound, and the 124th film of his career at that date (1945)." He then turned over the helm of the night's narration to stage, film, and TV director (and former governor of the Academy) George Schaefer, who would introduce each set of film clips during the show.

Schaefer said, "It was in '44 that I first met Boris. We were in the Army doing soldier shows out in the Pacific, and he volunteered to come out and

join the soldiers in an all-soldier cast of *Annie* and *Old Lace*. We were all puffed up at the thought of the star of the original Broadway production arriving in the company, which was already rehearsed and waiting for him, then came in the sweetest, dearest, most cultivated man that one could ever meet. He won everyone over as we flew the production to all the outer islands. He stayed with us for four or five months, and Boris and I were friends from that point on. I never did get to direct Boris in a film, which I regret. I did *Arsenic* with him on Broadway and directed him in another play and two big television specials. And film was his great love; he was convinced that film acting was more demanding than stage work."

"He seemed like an unlikely man to become the star he was," the host of the evening continued. "He had to overcome a stammer in his youth; he always had a slight limp, which he used beautifully to perfection. He was in a lot of pain in his later years due to back trouble and he was slightly bowlegged. And yet, he became the tremendous star we're honoring on this, pretty much the 100th anniversary of his youth."

"Lugosi was originally offered the role of Frankenstein's monster and had turned it down. In all, the two actors co-starred in six films during a 12-year period, beginning with Universal's *THE BLACK CAT* in 1934."

Karloff made over 140 films in 53 years, the first being in 1916. He had appeared in 56 features before being seen in his first sound film, in most of the silent, he played muchs and villains. He also played the heavy in road company tours of popular melodramas during that time.

The next two clips were a case in itself. Both were films from 1936, one year before sound came onto the screen. The first was from a movie called *The Nicklheimer*; it was funny as B.K. tries to pick up Mabel Normand in a crowd. Failing to do so, he then attempts to take back \$10 of his own

money from a blind man (which Normand had given the street beggar). This was followed by a clip from *The Bells*, in which Karloff played The Merman in a carnival side show (he invites a girl and a fat man's bat). This film also featured Lionel Barrymore.

"Boris could actually (scare you), you know," Schaefer elaborated after the second clip was over. "He could look at you when the moon was full and you'd run! He used to scare the bejeezus out of us! After the arrival of sound, Boris continued to be cast in supporting roles as the heavy, even following his elevation to stardom with the popular success of *Frankenstein* in 1931. In such landmark works as Howard Hawks' *The Criminal Code* (which Boris himself would watch on television 37 years later as Peter Bogdanovich's excellent *Targets*) and John Ford's *The Lost Patrol*, Boris served to add color of an almost invariably darker hue to the stories' central subjects."



Then a clip from *Saints* (1932) was shown, as B.K. played the only thug left alive after the St. Valentine's Day massacre. Next was a few minutes from *The Lost Patrol* (made two years later), in which Karloff portrayed a religiously fanatic soldier.

Next came *Frankenstein* clips of B.K. reaching for the skylight in the laboratory, and the infamous moment of floating flowers with the little girl

and her "kitty" by the river. Then came the touching scene with the blind man ("Alone, bad, friend, good") from *The Bride of Frankenstein*, also from the same film was the sequence in which Karloff's monster tells his Doctor, "I want (woman) friend, like me. I love dead, hate living!" After Elsa Lanchester is lowered down from her slab and unveiled, the runs from the male monster screaming, causing him to cry, "She hates me!" "Oh, how Elsa would have adored to be here tonight," said the host when the clip was ended.

There then followed bits from three movies in a row, the first being *The Maniac*, as a sister-looking Boris asks a woman if they had met each other before. "No, I don't think so," she told him hypnotic eyes. "I don't think one would forget meeting you!" He then induces a coronary in a man who tells him, "If I could get my hands on you, I'd break your dried flesh to pieces!"

The clip from *The Mask of Fu Manchu* had Karloff saying, "People, out of courtesy, like to call me Doctor," to a man before tying him down beneath a huge bell for the slow Torture of the Bell (Boris walks away from the gay torturing). The last sequence in the group was from Universal's 1936 *The Invisible Ray*, in which the actor was a victim of radiation exposure. His face and hands glow in the dark and after petting a dog, the animal falls down dead, with a glowing emanation of B.K.'s hand on its forehead. Karloff sported curly dark hair and a mustache in this film. Viewing all these juxtaposed bits and pieces from the man's career back to back reminded all what a fine actor Karloff really was and how virtually all his movies are still great fun to watch.

An introduction for the next three film clips (all from films co-starring Karloff's old friend, Bela Lugosi, himself no less memorable a genre institution), George Schaefer said, "Lugosi was originally offered the role of Frankenstein's monster and had turned it down. In all, the two actors co-starred in six films during a 12-year period, beginning with Universal's *The Black Cat* in 1934."

"Boris always knew that, were it not for his legion of fans, he would not be able to do what he loved to do, which was, of course, act."

A sequence from *The Raven* (1935) was seen first, and the comic chemistry between these two odd acting buddies was still wonderful to watch. Karloff: "I want you should change my face" Lugosi: "It isn't plastic surgery, but... does it a ray?" Following some funny black humor regarding B.K.'s having torched his way out of prison, he sits down in Dr. Volkan's (B.L.'s) operating chair. "Maybe if a man looks ugly, he does ugly things," Boris tells Bela, who answers, "You are saying something profound!" Karloff is later de-bandaged to find that the bad Doctor has paralyzed one side of his face. Lugosi then looks him in the room and laughs at him as the escaped con emits low, monster-sounding growls.

From *The Black Cat* was a scene where B.K. shows B.L. his (Lugosi's) wife, who has been preserved in a glass case. "I wanted to have her beauty too. I loved her too," Karloff tells him sadly. A black kitty then scares the hell out of Bela, then Boris lays down in bed with a beautiful blonde.

In *The Body Snatcher*, Lugosi threatens Karloff with exposing his nighttime (grave-robbing) activities. He pites Bela with drugged brandy, thus another Lugosi by simply using one of his hands. (It's a bit of a prolonged, realistic death for a 1945 horror film.)

One year after that film, Karloff portrayed "one of his most fully concealed non-monster roles, as the all-too-human head of the British insane asylum in *Bellam*. Boris was a more insidious, modern kind of evil as a man whose appetite for money and position leads him to exploit the suffering of those unfortunate in his care." The clip which followed had Karloff as Master Sims telling a young woman, "Most people laugh at my ugliness," to which she replies, "It offends me.

DEATH TO THE SCIENTIST WHO CREATED HIM!

THE MONSTER TALKS

The Frankenstein Monster challenges his maker!

To agree meant another monstrosity roaming the world!... To refuse meant the end of life and love!

CARL LAGMANN PRESENTS
KARLOFF

THE Bride of FRANKENSTEIN

Sir?" She later describes him to Lord Mortimer as, "A stench of nostril and a gutter bremming with slop!" "But why?" he adds. Karloff later offers the Lord a play with his "lookies" as actors, then Boris shows the woman the pathetic inmates, explaining to her, "You have no idea how annoying they can be!"

The first panel of the evening was then introduced (both panels were presented over by Mr. Schaefer), at a incredible amount of screen history was represented on stage by Mae (Frankenstein) Clarke, Anna Lee (the pretty girl from Bedlam) and another genre giant, Vincent Price. Mae Clarke, who also took the grapefruit in the face from Jimmy Cagney in The Public Enemy, began the discussion.

Mae Clarke "Life with Boris was hard to come by. I think he had six hours ahead of the rest of us in that makeup room. We did all have a little piece of Boris, and everyone became part of the whole. I am now the only one left from Frankenstein, and I'd like to say, 'Happy, happy birthday, Boris!'

And also, "Happy anniversay, dear Eric Karloff (Boris' widow)."

the Body Snatcher

Anna Lee. "The first picture I did with Boris was a long, long time ago. It was called The Man Who Changed His Mind, then later called The Man Who Lived Again. Anyway, there was Boris and myself and John Loder and two chimpanzees; I remember the chimps because they had the dressing room next to mine. But Boris, I remember, even in those days, was always a very dear, gentle, loving man, and one thing we had in common was poetry. We used to have a sort of jam session on poetry. I would say, 'Between the dark and the daylight,' and he'd finish the line I could never find a poem he didn't know. Then, years later when I was in America, we made Bedlam,

which we never felt was a horror picture. It was beautifully produced by Val Lewton (who co-wrote the script with director Mark Robson under the pseudonym Carlos Keith). I thought Boris gave a brilliant performance because he could be very sadistic at one moment, and then you almost felt tears in your eyes at the end when he was pleading for his life, when he felt the whole world was looking at his ugliness and he was afraid. He was a wonderful man who had a great scope of talent."

George Schaefer. "He certainly did have knowledge of poetry in great detail. He was so wonderful on the radio show of Information Please. I don't know if many of you remember that, but he'd always be pitted against the leading beauties of America, and he'd always come out on top. Just a brilliant man."

Vincent Price. "My memories of Boris are long; I worked with him from the beginning of my career right through both of our careers. The first picture I did with him was The Tower of London. I'd only done about two movies, and I was terribly impressed to be working with two of my favorite actors-Boris Karloff and Basil Rathbone. I had what we call today a cameo part; that means a small role (laughs) for very little money. I played the Duke of Clarence, Basil played Richard III and Boris, of course, played the executioner. We had a scene where we had to drink for the King of England. It was a drinking bout. And Rowland Lee, who directed the picture, didn't like the dialogue and neither did we, because the more we drank the less we could remember of it. It was only Coca Cola, but Coca Cola's stimulating, too. So, Rowland said 'To hell with the dialogue. Why don't you just ad lib it?' Well, over in one corner was a huge vat of wine into which I was to be thrown. Boris and Basil, knowing I was new to the business, thought it was great fun to throw everything they could think of into that vat of wine: old Coca Cola bottles, cigarette butts, anything to dirty it up because they knew I had to get into it at the end of the scene. So,

we did our scene and Boris and Basil threw me in, whereupon they jumped on top of it, and the lid stuck, and I'm six feet under in all this dog. After, they got me out and said I was very good in the scene for a newcomer; they presented me with a case of Coca Cola. Christopher Lee called me yesterday and he was furious he couldn't be here; because he felt, as I did, an enormous closeness with Boris as a friend and a co-worker. I loved him very much. This marvelous warmth he had as a human being, he was a very funny man, and all of this was against the image that Boris had. We used to go out to dinner together in London and it was wonderful fun, because we'd walk in and we could clear the biggest restaurant in town! We never had to make reservations because whenever we'd walk in, people'd walk out. The thing I remember most about him is the fact that I got on an airplane last year-Boris had been gone some 20 years and I've been around and almost gone for about the same-and everybody asked for my autograph. I was very flattened they remembered.

"I was pleased that both of the pictures I wrote with him in them were comedies, because he had a remarkably droll sense of humor, and, as we've seen tonight, he didn't get too much of a chance to use it."

bored. Finally, one man looked at me and said, 'Mr. Karloff, I have always wanted your autograph!' So, I gave him Boris Karloff's autograph!"

Mac Clacie then told the story of how B.K. kept her from losing her companion when frightening her in the bedroom scene from *Frankenstein*-by wagging his little finger she was able to not be scared when he surprised her (which she was afraid she would be). Vincent Price added, "I think one of the extraordinary things about Boris was his gratitude for Frankenstein. It was something that plagued him his whole life, as a good part always plagues an actor, but he was so grateful for it because it gave him enormous fame-possibly the most lasting fame in Hollywood."



The three veteran stars then left the stage to warm applause as Schaefer introduced the next clip, from Roger Corman's *The Raven* (1963, written by Richard Matheson). "I think *Comedy of Terror* (which Vincent Price made with Karloff and Peter Lorre, who had also teamed up in *The Raven*) had the funniest premise I've ever known. It was about a family of out-of-work undertakers," said Price before taking his seat in the audience again. (The piece of *The Raven* involved Karloff and Lorre's battle of trickery after a young Jack Nicholson tells B.K., "I am Dr. Beddoe's (Lorre's) son," to which Karloff replies, "Sorry!?)

Before the last two clips of the evening (both from Peter Bogdanovich's chilling *Targets*) were shown, the show's host introduced the filmmaker, along with Robert Wise and Richard Matheson, always one of my favorite writers, onto the stage for the second panel discussion of the night.

Peter Bogdanovich: "Well, *Targets* was my first picture-it was 20 years ago now-and Boris owed Roger Corman two days work, and Roger is known to use every moment. So he said, 'I made a picture with Boris called *The Terror* (which utilized the exact same set as *The Raven* and also co-starred Nicholson). I want you to take 20 minutes of

Karloff footage out of *The Terror*, then shoot 10 minutes with Boris in two days. You can shoot 20 minutes in two days. I've shot whole pictures in two days. Then you'll have 40 minutes of Karloff. Then, I want you to go out and shoot 40 more minutes of stuff with some other actors and then we'll have a new 80-minute Karloff picture!" At some point along the way I had an idea it would be interesting if Boris played himself, so to speak: an aging, hoarse movie star who wanted to quit because the random violence in the '60s—which hasn't left us yet—was more terrifying than the kind of Victorian monster he'd been playing. So Bob liked the script but there was no way we could shoot his stuff in two days, we needed five, and Boris gave us the extra three—that's how it started."

Richard Matheson: "I want to comment on the staircase scene with Boris we just saw (from *The Raven*). I never knew the physical affliction he had. I've just found out tonight he had severe arthritis in both legs. That staircase, which was designed by Danny Halle (who'd later go on to direct *The Monster, Die!* and *The Dunwich Horror*) was very precarious and narrow, with no railings to hold onto. He did it without any complaint whatsoever and never winced. I was pleased that both of the pictures I wrote with him in them were comedies, because he had a remarkably droll sense of humor and, as we've seen tonight, he didn't get too much of a chance to use it. He was very good in both pictures. He and Basil Rathbone had to switch parts in *Comedy of Terror*, because by the

"Peter Bogdanovich: "Well, *TARGETS* was my first picture—it was 20 years ago now—and Boris owed Roger Corman two days work; Roger is known to use every moment."

time Boris got to that film, his condition was so bad that he could literally not walk around with any success at all. So, he gave the part that he was to play to Basil who, curiously enough, was older than Boris, but incredibly lively

at his age. One of the regrets of my writing life was I had written a third picture for American International called *Sweethearts and Horrors*, in which Mr. Price, Mr. Karloff, Mr. Lorne, Telly Savalas, and Basil Rathbone were supposed to play the Sweetheart family. The Sweethearts were all show biz people who were coming home to the reading of the will of their father, who made magic gags and devices. It could've been a delightful picture, but before they could shoot it, three of them died, so it was never made."

George Schaefer: "Boris would love every Sunday night during his late fifties when he'd sit in his back yard with martinis and (the) Jack Benny (program) and be regaled. And, when in London, we'd see the Crazy Gang over there and he adored that kind of broad, slapstick comedy. He was never happier."

"Lugosi's casting was an afterthought; he was not in the original story at all, but we thought, 'Hey, wouldn't it be great to have Boris and Lugosi on film again?'"

Robert Wise: "I'll never forget our (Wise and Val Lewton) first meeting with Boris. Val had been making a series of psychological horror pictures for RKO, like *Cat People* and *I Walked With a Zombie*, and they decided they wanted to have a Karloff picture. Initially, Val was quite taken with that idea because it was a different type of picture than he'd been doing. We didn't know what to expect (upon meeting Karloff) and he walked this lovely, charming, cultivated man with a soft-spoken voice. He was having a severe problem with his back at the time he was doing *The Body Snatcher*, but he never complained. He was very keen on doing that picture because it was a very good role and not the monster he'd been playing so many times, and Boris gave his all. (Lugosi's casting) was an afterthought; he was not in the original story at all, but we thought, 'Hey, wouldn't it be great to have Boris and Lugosi on film again?' Lugosi was not well at all during the filming and Boris couldn't have been sicker or more helpful to him in the scenes we saw from the film tonight. He was very careful with him. Boris was marvelous to work with. He was very professional and dedicated, and the asthmatism of what he appeared to be on screen in so many ways."

Peter Bogdanovich: "There was no scene in *Targets* like the one we are about to show first. Boris was the most wonderful storyteller so we thought, 'Wouldn't it be nice if he told a story in the picture?' So we came up with a reason why he'd tell it. In the hotel room, he tells this legend about Death catching up with a merchant in Samara. We had to get the rights from the Somerset Maugham estate, who'd written it as an introduction to a play, to use the story. It turned out to be about a page and a half of stuff that Boris had to say and we decided to do it without a cut. It was funny because there were about five actors sitting around in the scene and it was about one o'clock in the morning—it was a wonderful way to start for me because here was this legend and his wonderful wife, Eva, putting drapes up in the set. Anyway, I said, 'Boris, I think we'll do this scene without a cut, beginning with you, passing around the others, and coming back to you.' He said, 'No, I don't need an edit board.' It was a complicated shot, there was a table in the way, which we had to mask away as we moved in to Boris. The story's about Death coming in on you no matter what you do, so I held on Boris at the end and he did this wonderful little thing because his character was thinking about dying, and the whole crew just erupted to applaud at the end, just like that. He got tears in his eyes; he was such a professional and a man who really loved what he was doing. It was just a great experience to have such a great man in my first picture."

Bogdanovich, Matheson, and Wise then took seats in the front row to watch the clip (my favorite scene in the picture). Karloff tells this chilling tale of Death's inevitability as only he could, with his magnificent vocal inflections ("I'd like to leave you with a little story to think about as you drove home (pause) through the darkness"). I advise you to go out and rent *Targets* tonight, even if you've seen it already—it's certainly worth viewing again.

George Schaefer then introduced other celebrities in the crowd, namely Patricia Medina, who starred in the "Promiscuous Bunch" episode of the *Thriller* TV series (which B.K. hosted and occasionally acted in as well); Medina's husband and old friend of the Karloffs', actor Joseph Cotton, actress Marie Weston (who starred with Karloff in 1940's *The Angel*), and his co-star from *The Baron* (1943), Basil Rathbone. There were also two members of Boris Karloff's family in attendance, his daughter Sarah Cotton and "our own precious love," the woman who made Boris' last years so gloriously happy, one of the gems of this world," Eric Karloff himself. "Both always knew that, were it not for his legion of fans, he would not be able to do what he loved to do, which was, of course, act," Schaefer continued. "I suspect that somehow he's aware of all who's gathered here in his honor tonight and, in his typical modesty, he's probably embarrassed. But, I hope, wherever he is, he is extremely pleased."

The final film clip was then shown, which was Karloff and Bogdanovich (who also acted in his own picture) watching *The Cimarron Code* on TV in *Targets*, as the great actor ruminated on his career in the movie. As the house lights came up, a crowd of autograph seekers buzzed around Vincent Price as he inchéd his way to the exit, politely thanking all every step of the way. I grabbed signatures from Richard Matheson and Robert Wise (Bogdanovich had left by this time), and on the way out I noticed Leonard (TV Movies) Maltin and Army Archerd in the lobby of the building.

Originally set to last about 155 minutes, the show ran a full three hours. A night of great entertainment and tribute—it had been a hell of a lot of fun for just \$5.00!





Since last issue's snafu-ed ditzilee about the state of Chas. Balun's crumbling film empire (Up! There it is again—the "I" word!), our Hollywood reporter and agent provocateur presents from the trenches that of Chasino has sold out and Leslie Yankino is running things now.

Leslie's like the future of Empire's last 100 films, as well as the persistent, high profile hate campaign waged by one persistent puritanical rag and its spineless editor as reasons behind the Decline of the Modern Empire.

Such a pity.

EUROGORE

LUCIO FULCI UPDATE: Our European correspondent reports that Fulci is back with a vengeance after his heart surgery. 10am, did the guy film it? Fans of the man's peculiar genius should get ready for it!

ENIGMA: Kathy, an ugly stranded girl, is set upon by snobs at an exclusive school and ends up in the hospital where she takes her revenge, using her special mental powers. **CARRIE** meets **SUSP(ER)U**, maybe? Reported to be very violent and includes nightmares, possession, and evil spells.

DRIVE'S HOME: Fulci fell seriously ill during the filming of this "offbeat," romantic drama which features lush photography, bloo jobs, peeks-werking, masturbation, SEM (yowza), and a sex playboy with sex problems in mind of the usual stoners, dorkin, and cat jerking. I'll wait 'till it comes to cable.

MURDERBROCK (THE DANCING DEATH): Described as a "bloodless slasher thriller," this murder mystery is about killings at a girl's dance school and features **FLASHDANCE**-style numbers and an assortment of loony and bizarre. Police walked before production wrapped; the film was finished by another director.

ZOMBIE 3: A toxic waste cloud contaminates both the animal and human populations of a Southeast Asian resort hotel and the handful of survivors take a last stand at an abandoned military base. It's THE BIRDS vs. DAY OF THE DEAD and it won't be in 3-D or originally planned.

Other projects recently announced by Fulci that are now in various stages of pre-production include ALICE BROKE THE MIRROR and L'ALDILÀ (THE MORNING SHIP), which concerns itself with a seafarers love affair that turns into cannibalism. Also in the works is THE BEYOND II, the much-delayed sequel to his 1983 masterpiece, which arrived in the U.S. fractured to pieces, awkwardly scored with a new soundtrack, and retitled SEVEN DOORS OF DEATH.

Just get a chance to view the cut, end-a-screen Japanese laser disc version of THE BEYOND (L'ALDILÀ); it is, indeed, as artful as an Angstus film. With less primping violence excised from the U.S. prints, it's in as gory as anything in ZOMBIE or GATES OF HELL. Shivers! Dafford's zombie mismatch is primo stuff.

Also from Italy comes a slew of Lamberto Bava films slated for release in Italy on television, but scheduled for theatrical bookings outside the country. The areas,

NEWS

SLASHES

BY CHAS. BALUN

enthusiastic appraisal of Bava's most recent efforts.

Ruggero Deodato is filming UN CRITTO FOGLIO COMMUNE (AN UNCOMMON CRIME/OFF BALANCE) with Donald Pleasence and Michael York. He may still go ahead with CANNIBAL HOLD-CAVUT 2.

Sequel **SPIDER'S EYES**, SPECTERS, OPERA is working on IL NIDO DEL RAGNO (THE SPIDER'S NEST) to be directed by Gianni Gagliano and LA CROCE DALLE SETTE DIETRI (CROSS OF THE SEVEN STONES), directed by Antonio Andolfi, which promises to be the first Italian horror film to combine elements of birth, sex, gore, and the Mafia!

Also turning up on video in Italy is a rare spaghetti splatter opus entitled L'ALTRO INFERNO (THE OTHER INFERNO), directed

...E TU VIVRAI
NEL TERRORE!



L'ALDILA'

KATHERINE MCCOLL · DAVID WARBECK · SARAH KELLER
ANTONIO SAINT JOHN · VERONICA LAZAR

LUCIO FULCI

Regia di Lucio Fulci | Produzione di Sergio Martini | Montaggio di Sergio Martini | Fotografia di Sergio Martini | Colore

by one Steven Oblewski (aka Bruce NIGHT OF THE ZOMBIES Matt).

Apparently, Dr. Sennich polishes a Major Superior and the unholy offspring of the heinous queen causes all sorts of unpleasantness to occur at the local nursery. The Clean-Hearted One makes a giant appearance, may get butchered, and devil dogs eat people.

Golly, sounds like a maniac, yes?



NETHERLANDS - Hellfire's hardest working splatter auteur is Wim Vink, whose latest film, HALF PAST MIDNIGHT, is supposedly his most ambitious gore-drenched opus to date. Watch for a feature article about this aesthetically oriented but well-reviewed national release.



GERMANY - Herr's NECROMANTIK and the slightly perverse art which accompanied its well-received national release.

EIN FILM UBER DIE LIEBE ZUM MENSCHEN UND WAS VON IHM UBRIG BLEIBT



Di Film von JORG BUTTGENREIT

Rola and Betty are involved in a rather unique marriage à trois. You see, only two thirds of the trio is still breathing. Worse yet, Betty eventually leaves Rola for Mr. Whoo-hoo, causing Rola to resort to all kinds of kinky to satisfy his sexual needs. Yikes!



AUSTRALIA - From a country whose reputation in producing The World's Most Bloody Films seems to go unchallenged year after year, comes encouraging news for genre fans: *It's G'Day* Vika. Mind you now, the government has banned such films as THE TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE 2, DAY OF THE DEAD, and LAST HOUSE ON THE LEFT and is currently considering a heavy censorship campaign to clamp down hard on films containing "high levels of violence."

Mark Sarge's MARAUDERS has already come under fire for torture and violence and Berlin Partnership's ZOMBIE BRIGADE grosses no better.

If you have a strong stomach and a taste for blood and gore, then see WIM VINK'S

HALF PAST MIDNIGHT



REVENGE IS SWEET... BLOODSWEET

Get real, folks. Stuff like CROCODILE DUNDEE, THE GETTING OF GIDDYUP, and MY BRILLIANT CAREER isn't Koko woooo.

More on the burgeoning independent genre scene in Australia and Europe next issue. Keep the faith, kids, and STAND UP FOR YOUR RIGHTS!

Also more in-depth reporting on several other roadside curios who have got some interesting tales to tell about just how tough it really is to finance, shoot, produce, and distribute your own "drama project." As you'll see, just getting your film through post-production and "in the can" seems to be roughly one-third of the battle. Getting it seen by anyone other than cult, crew, and immediate family becomes the major concern.

Deep Red will present press for the future backyard Rammie out there who can currently benefit from what these guys have to say. They've done it. They know. "He who does not remember the past is condemned to repeat it."

We'll talk with Kim Alex (LUNCHMEAT), Tim Ritter (TRUTH OR DARE, KILLING SPREE), Nathan Schiff (THEY DON'T CUT THE GRASS ANYMORE, WEASELS RIP MY FLESH, LONG ISLAND

CANNIBAL MASSACRE), Fan Lewnes (REDNECK ZOMBIES, TOXIC AVENGER 2), and Doyle Adams, producer of the upcoming Lowenstein thriller, BEYOND DREAM's DOOR, now undergoing production in Columbus, Ohio. Stay tuned.

The upcoming DEADLY SPAWN 2 promises to deliver some mighty impressive creature FX of numero passe to be true. Ron Cole's pre-production preparations will baffle us anything soon as Carpenter's THE THING. SPAWN 2 reportedly has a 9-foot-tall boar, as well as dozens of other FX generated by an ambitious crew of first coat kids including: Brian Oates, Vincent Guarini, Paul Reilly, Paul Gilligan's kid! Dever, and Eliot White. Ted Balow, producer of the original film, will provide a photo update for us next issue.

Hey, I've got just the thing for you the next time you're muddling our during some Joe Penno film—the Serial Killers' new album, "Roadside Rambunctious." Proper the topline, proper carnival babies and those bogus, out-of-focus jungle chev-chucks, get laced into a gauzy stupor by songs like "Graveyard Serenade," "The Nighttime Sons of Ed Gein," "Love Letter to Jamie Lee Curtis,"

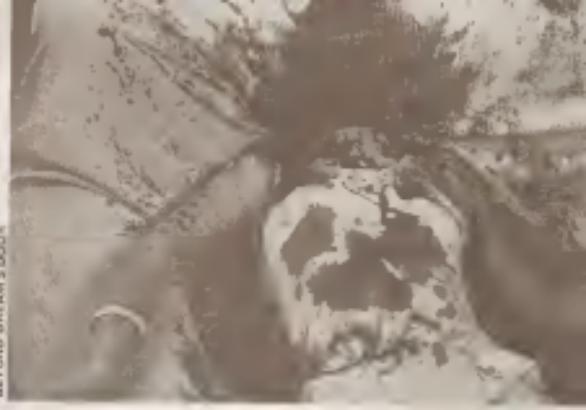
Produced MANFRED O. JELINSKI



BEYOND DREAM'S DOOR



LUNCH MEAT



"Teenage Bloodlust," and, of course, "Blood N' Guts N' Rock N' Roll." Their lyrics are far more intense and graphic than the last dozen splatter flicks you've seen and destined to make the censor's eyes burn like hell.

"...Surrounded by yuppies, faggots, and sleevies, general folks my ol' shakin' n' mow 'em all down. The New is fenny, you know it doesn't last! You fenny switcheroos can kill your ass peaday!" (From "Blood N' Guts N' Rock N' Roll")

The band's favorite director is Dario Argento and their stage show features dismemberments, blood-spraying heads, zombies playing guitars, and some of the most naked, high voltage, rock n' roll this ol' hippie's heard in a long, long time.

For information on their albums (pressed onto blood red vinyl, 'natch), write these twisted duds at Serial Killers World Headquarters, P.O. Box 15586, Philadelphia, PA 19103-6886.

Steve (FRIGHT NIGHT, AMERICAN WEREWOLF) Johnson is currently working on a two minute, FX-heavy slice to (what else?) **NIGHTMARE ON ELM ST. 4: THE DREAM MASTERS**, designed and storyboarded by both Johnson and director **Rene (PRISON) Martin**.

Johnson's career has picked up considerable momentum since leaving **Boss Films** a couple of years ago after **PREDATOR**. By the way, don't ever ask Johnson about that film...it's a FX man's nightmare.



SERIAL KILLERS



Review signs at Fango Con

Johnson's newest work can be seen in DEAD HEAT, a film he says was submitted to the MPAA "six times for an 'X' rating." Watch for the upcoming HALLOWEEN PARTY (featuring in Deep Red II for its outrezzes "apple pie"), now retitled as NIGHT OF THE DEMONS (starring Steve's girlfriend Linnea Quigley) and NIGHT ANGEL, currently in post-production and directed by Connie Gared and written by our old pal, Joe Augustyn.

Steve and Linnea recently toured Japan, along with Dick Smith and Screening Neil George, participating in a week-long program of demonstrations and makeup contests to promote "Halloween" as an official holiday in the horror-hungry Orient.

Linnea is currently starring in I WAS A TEENAGE SEX MUTANT and will be seen in an upcoming issue of *Premiere* magazine, wearing a \$10,000 Bob Mackie dress and cutting up with a chainsaw.

Linnea also said her recent activities include investing in an Animal Liberation demonstration at UCLA, and going into pre-production on VICE ACADEMY, a comedy directed by Rick Stein in which she'll play a rookish vice cop.

Linnea's contract has expired with her management team and she's currently seeking more offers of film work through her new official Fan Club address: 14041 Van Owen Street, Suite No. 528, Van Nuys, CA 91405.

Beast wishes to Splinterstein's *Sweatshirt Scrammer*. (Anybody who sends hand-drawn Halloween cards to me, the Mrs. and all five of our dogs and cats deserve special mention in these boorish times.)


Buddy Givensenn, the unapologetically director whose first film, COMBAT SHOCK (Deep Red 3) is finally getting some degree of attention, is busy writing scripts and teaching film at a local college. He's written DEAD AND MARRIED (directed by Tim BREEDERS (Kissoid), RADAR WAVES, and JONATHAN OF THE NIGHT, a contemporary vampire yarn that he's included in a promotional card with Joe Spinell's MANIAK 2, and he's shopping around for investors. Buddy will also be talking with Tomo Film about writing and directing TERRORS OF TRONA HIGH this summer.

Buddy G's COMBAT SHOCK joins STREET TRASH and THOU SHALT NOT KILL...EXCEPT as honored recipients of Deep Red's Achievement Award for Outstanding Performance in an independent Film Production.

FANGORIA'S WEEKEND OF HORROR! Jeze! Where RUSH... Clive Barker's HELLRAISER jacket stolen within moments. Savini signing hundreds of Deep Red covers. Romero, Hooper, England, Russo, Perkins, and John Buscemi! Now it can be revealed... My Fangoria articles are written and "In the can" and the truth needs to be told: Buscemi's FRIDAY THE 13TH, PART VII: THE NEW BLOOD blows God of Ghoulies in Hell! It's the worst of the lot, easily. A low-budget, bogus slasher, unscripted and done by the numbers in an amateur, tedious, and cynical manner by an Empire

Two Psychos



Fangs undergrounders who had previously blessed, "I've never done a slasher picture and I never wanna do one."

That's the ticket, John. Now Jason's in the toilet, too, right alongside the grinnin' ghouls. Thanks, bud.

Cool! Get off the subject a bit, blarney game just do that even to the best of us. Now, back to the news.

Tim (Gore) Larsen, one of the new FX auteur profilers in last issue, made us especially proud during Fang's Weekend when he and his partner walked away with First Prize in the Makeup Contest, judged in a totally unbiased manner by a totally unbiased评委, Tony Thompson, Tom Savini, and some no-naming patient from one of the local universities. (I checked Steven's ballot; he gave Tim and Mike a "98," as did Tony Thompson.)



Co-Editor with LUNCHMEAT's Raney



Tim "Gore" Larsen and "The Dark One", Winners of the 1984 Fangoria International Makeup Contest

a weekend to remember.

Let the pictures here tell the rest of the story. Deep Red...Fangs...Shit, we're all family here and we hell a fuckin' gas!

A friend-sentenced, deep apolstar salute to Tim, Mike, Tony, Peter, Eric, and Tom Savini for making it



"I WAS A TROMA-TIZED TOXIC, NUKED-OUT REDNECK ZOMBIE"

How to Make a Cult Movie on Ten Cents a Day and Still Have Bus Fare Home

BY DENNIS DANIEL



Independent movie producers are the unsung heroes of the cinematic world. In a business that is dominated by several major film companies who release a steady flow of mainstream mass appeal movies designed to cash in on their respective demographics, the independents must manage to survive by giving the public what they really want (and what the tight-ass, money-hungry majors generally can't). Lots gone, lots and lots, violence and hoover. In other words... fun movies!

The demented folks at Troma Films have been providing us with these basic necessities of life for over 15 years! (And they're still going strong.) They have brought you cult exploitation classics like BLOODSUCKING FREAKS, COMBAT SHOCK, FAT GUY GOES NUTZOID, I MARRIED A VAMPIRE, ZOMBIE ISLAND MASSACRE, SPLATTER UNIVERSITY, SURF NAZIS MUST DIE, MONSTER IN THE CLOSET, and more. They've also produced and directed their own "in-house" productions, including THE

TOXIC AVENGER and CLASS OF NUKE 'EM HIGH.

On a cold January morning in New York City, I once again walked through the Hell's Kitchen entrance doors of the Troma Building. This time, I was going to talk to Troma, Inc. President, Lloyd Kaufman...the Roger Corman of the 80's. The man who, along with his partner Michael Herz, brainizes the world. Not only do they both run the company, they also collaborate with their Troma team to write, produce, and

CLASS OF NUKE 'EM HIGH



desk is the equally cluttered desk of his partner, Mike. The entire office is filled to the brim with Troma movie posters, video box sets (with Troma movies in them, written in all kinds of languages from around the world), a "dead burned victim" special FX prop has on top of some shelves behind Lloyd's desk. To my left elbow, I noticed a realistic necklace of severed human ears, an important prop in *TROMA'S WAR*. As I sat down in front of him, I noticed a unique twinkle in his eyes. This is a man who loves what he's doing. He's not some uppity-nosed, three-piece suited movie mogul, he's one of us. "I've always been a movie nut, in my last two years of college (he graduated from Yale in 1969), I pretty much just made movies. Once I graduated, I was interested in making movies on my own."

Lloyd's first independent film was called *THE BATTLE OF LOVE'S RETURN*. "It was almost a professional movie," Lloyd remembers. While working on his next film, *SUGAR COOKIES* (featuring cult icon Mary Woronov), Lloyd ran into his old Yale buddy Michael Herz (who was then going to NYU Law School) who decided to team up with Lloyd. "Michael felt it might be an interesting way to pass the time," Lloyd recalls. And with that, in 1971, the seeds of Troma were sown.

"I asked Lloyd why they formed Troma. He replied, 'We got screwed! We had made three films and didn't get any money back! The distributors hoisted us!'"

After several unsuccessful attempts at getting distribution deals for their films, Lloyd and Michael decided to learn all about distribution themselves and created their own company, Troma, Inc. ("Troma" comes from Latin, it means "excellence in celluloid"). When I asked Lloyd why they formed Troma, he replied, "We got screwed! We had made three films and didn't get any money back! The distributors hoisted us!" So, using American International Pictures and Roger Corman as role models, Troma was born in 1974. "We knew that we'd have to become independent movie distributors as well as independent movie producers or we'd never make another movie again."

direct their own films and come up with all those easily exploitation movie titles and campaigns. (God, how I love these posters.)

When I first set eyes on Lloyd, he was all decked out, wearing the latest in sweat pants. His grey longsleeve sweatshirt is graced with a color drawing of Popeye. He is leaning back on his desk chair, his sneakered feet up on his desk, which is covered with all kinds of paperwork and memos. Across from him

Lloyd and Michael learned all the ropes of distribution from the bottom up. They acquired a number of films, did various freelance jobs, worked on *ROCKY*, *SATURDAY NIGHT FEVER*, and other films, then used that money to make *SQUEEZE PLAY*, a 1978 film about softball. "The film did quite well around the world. It was even a No. 1 hit in Denmark." Troma was on its way!

Since then, Troma has averaged about two new films a year (they are constantly looking for interesting, unique, one-of-a-kind films to distribute). "We like to take our time," Lloyd observes. "We even edit our films on an old Moviola because we like to touch the film...feel the film as it comes together. It's a luxury, but what the hell. That's why I'm here, I'm here to make a movie. So...we take a little longer. Why not? We don't have any stockholders. We've got no banks...we've got nobody to answer to but ourselves." This is very true. Troma is debt free! They don't believe in wasting millions of dollars. They have seen how other independents (Cannon Films, Empire Pictures) have lost millions by a combination of poor judgment and rash job filmmaking.

Two of Troma's finest independently produced and directed projects are Deep Red favorites—*THE TOXIC AVENGER* and *CLASS OF NUKE 'EM HIGH*. To me, these films define the word "exploitation." They both have a gritty, cheapish charm about them that makes them both endearing and hysterical. In both, they tackle the present day issue of toxic waste and its effect on the environment. "The point with *TOXIC* is...toxic waste is a very serious problem. We're not necessarily against nuclear power, if they can deal with it properly, why shouldn't we have it? The problem in our society is full of pigs who are just sloshing at the trough of greed. There's no control over these people. The trouble is not technology—technology is excellent—it just gets controlled by the big boys who spit out their faces all over the place." (Wow! Pretty heavy shit! I just thought they were cute gore movies!) "The message of *TOXIC AVENGER* isn't bad. After all, the super hero is born from toxic waste. The message is...we've got a problem here. Toxic waste should be dealt

with. Our movies call attention to that issue."

The movies also call attention to some pretty heavy goref. Especially in TOXIC, where they run over a little kid—TWICE! They also wipe out a guide dog, split heads open, poke eyes out, deep fry a guy's arms, pull some fat guy's gut out, dry clean a midget old lady, and put some guy's face through an ice cream sundae blender. "When we got complaints about the film, no one complained about killing the old, or anybody for that matter. They complained about the dog!" When I tried to explain to Lloyd how animal lovers don't like the idea of killing a defenseless creature, he brought up a valid point. "What about humans? People are being acted upon all over the world. Look at Africa. I know it's a terrible thing to kill a dog, don't get me wrong, but we had to make the villains real bad so you'd cheer on the hoss when he makes them into french fries!"

Lloyd likes the idea of using gore FX in a comedic fashion. "All the Troma movies that Mike and I make are basically comedies. I think no matter what we do, it'll turn out comedic. Even our latest film, TRONMA'S WAR, has been 'Tronomized.' "(This is the way Lloyd identifies all of Troma's product. It is the element that sets their films apart.) "I think you can tell, just by looking at our movies, that they're Troma films. They have that certain 'Aroma du Troma!'" That is one of the things I love about Troma films. Just like AIP, you can tell who made the film. Troma always uses Feltrequeque type characters, cynical humor, bizarre soundtracks, and wild ad campaigns! (Troma movie trailers are a pisces! They ought to release them as a feature!)

"Lloyd recalls, 'They did not want to give it any help. I thought it was a very powerful movie and I just can't imagine a critic sitting through it and not thinking, 'Holy Cow, this is something special!' It may be gloomy, but it's very profound.'"

Troma Pictures is a family operation. All of their product goes under the banner "A Troma Team Release." They are a breeding ground for fresh, young talent who want to learn about the movie business from casting to acting

BLOODSUCKING FREAKS



(Once again, just like AIP.) You may not be paid much working for Troma, but you'll get plenty of experience. "We like to discover up-and-coming talent. There is a wealth of talented people in New York. Vincent D'Onofrio, who was up for an Academy Award for FULL METAL JACKET (he played the big dumb recruit who goes nuts), was in our film THE FIRST TURN ON. Keisha Castle (who played Eliza Ness in the new UNTOUCHABLES) was in Troma's SIZZLE BEACH USA. We have a reputation, so when we make a movie, people show up."

Let's get one thing straight—Lloyd Kaufman is no Stanley Kubrick. He doesn't pretend to be. When he's on location making a film, he shares the creative process with everyone. Even outsiders! "I remember during the filming of CLASS OF NUKE 'EM HIGH, 20/20 had sent a crew to do a

pics on us. They were filming a motorcycle crashing into something. I asked the 20/20 guy, 'What do you think would be the best angle for this?' He came up with the exact perfect angle. We had missed the key shot. It was right in front of us!"

It's refreshing to see this kind of attitude. I believe it contributes to the overall look and feel of a Troma film. They are very open creatively to the suggestions of the entire crew. Lloyd continues, "Talk to Pen about making WAR (Penelope Lowman, director of REDNECK ZOMBIES). Shooting, we had three film units going constantly. Pen would go off and film some 'cat-and-mouse' stuff of terrorists lurking in the woods. We needed cutaways of terrorists running to being attacked. We'd give him sort of a general idea and he would go out there, take his own film unit, and bring back some beautiful stuff! He's a very talented



gay." Share and share alike...that's Troma's motto. They give credit where it's due, make their people feel important, and get the job done ON TIME, ON BUDGET, CHEAPLY!

As well as having a talent for finding creative people to work on their self-produced films, Troma has a special talent for spotting the unique films of others. When they see a film that impresses them in any way (whether it's commercial or not), they pick it up for distribution. One such film was *BLOODSUCKING FREAKS* (originally titled *THE INCREDIBLE TORTURE SHOW*) Lloyd explains. "We found that film in 1975. Now, in its day, *BLOODSUCKING FREAKS* was so far ahead of anybody...I thought it was funny as hell! It was hilarious! I remember we brought it to the 1979 Cannes Film

Festival and screened it in theaters for the buyers. No one had seen anything like it! It had a very controversial run at the 8th Street Playhouse. In some theaters, it ran for as much as a year. The movie is still very much in demand. It's a classic."

A recent success for Troma is the wonderfully titled *SURF NAZIS MUST DIE*, directed by Peter George. It's an apocalyptic story about California after the great earthquake. Surf Nazis take over the beaches and eventually kill some poor black kid. Soon, his 400-pound, pistol-packin', cigar-chompin' Mama shows up to exact her revenge! "It happens to be a very good movie," Lloyd states. "It's tongue and cheek...it's beautifully photographed...it's great! We brought the film to Cannes last year, we had some screenings in big theaters, and it was a tremendous hit at the Festival! People are still talking about it."

Not every Troma acquisition is immediately successful, however. A recent example was the black-and-white thriller, *SCREAMPLAY*. "I was very offended by the critical world's reaction to *SCREAMPLAY*. I was shocked that they were so mercenary! I thought the principles of art houses was to help new artists and directors with vision. They all complained that *SCREAMPLAY* was in black-and-white, that was clearly their problem." Troma had similar

"The MPAA is unfair to the independents. They live at the behest of the big corporations. They raped *TOXIC AVENGER*; they disemboweled it!"

problems when they first released *COMBAT SHOCK*. Lloyd recalls, "They did not want to give it any help. I thought it was a very powerful movie and I just can't imagine a critic sitting through it and not thinking, 'Holy Cow, this is something special!' It may be gloomy, but it's very profound."

Troma has also had its share of problems with the MPAA (Motion Picture Association of America) who rates films. Although TOXIC AVENGER is available in its original unrated version on videotape, it was released theatrically as an "R" film. Make no bones about it, this pissed Lloyd off. "The MPAA is unfair to the independents. They live at the behest of the big corporations. They raped TOXIC AVENGER, they disembowelled it! In my opinion, the purpose of the MPAA is to regulate the competition for the majors. First Fugwood can show people getting shot in the head, but a smaller company who has the exact same shot? Out! Just look at John Carpenter's THE THING! I'm sorry, but they would never let Troma get away with FX like that! I don't care what they say; I believe there's some kind of double standard. It's only my opinion." (I tend to agree with him.)

Troma has two films in the works right now that sound very promising, TROMA'S WAR and TOXIC AVENGER II. TOXIC II will be Troma's first attempt at a sequel. Lloyd explains, "We wouldn't have done this if it wasn't for the fact that various companies around the world are interested in a TOXIC AVENGER, PART II." When I brought up the fact that most sequels stink, Lloyd pointed out that most sequels are not produced by the same creative team. Not the case with TOXIC II. "TOXIC II will be brought to you by the same team that worked on the first film. To the point where I believe...the same cameraman, the same production crew...we'll try to get everyone back. Then we'll kick them in the ass and say, 'Go farther than you did the first time!'"

"Lloyd explains, 'We found that film in 1976! Now, in its day, BLOODSUCKING FREAKS was so far ahead of anybody. I thought it was funny as hell! It was hilarious!'"

Hopefully, this theory will work. The story sure sounds interesting. "In a nutshell, there's some problems for TOX in Tremaville because Tremaville has been cleaned up. He has nothing to do. He's sort of relegated to making sure children eat their lame beans. He stops little old ladies from cheating at bridge...stuff like

that. He starts to become unpopular. So, he goes to a shrink, who tells him he should find his father, who is in Japan. TOX goes to Japan, finds out his father is evil and kills him. Well, this just makes him worse and he goes back to Tremaville in bad shape. He signs a deal with a bunch of evil men who want to take over Tremaville. It's sort of a Faustian situation because it turns out that the head of this company is the devil himself! At the end of the movie, TOX has to fight the devil. (By the way, the reason he signs the pact with the devil is so his wife, the blind girl, can have a \$100,000 operation so she can see.) She gets TOX back on his feet and makes him fight the devil

to save Tremaville." Pretty heavy psychological shit, huh? Who says Troma just makes schlocky films with no message?

On the editing block now at Troma is their most ambitious effort to date...TROMA'S WAR. It will contain all the exploitation elements that make a Troma film 100% Grade 'A' Troma-lots of sex, violence, satire, and gore. Oh, yes! Uncle Lloyd promises there'll be gore-a-plenty! "If there's such a thing as a Troma masterpiece," Lloyd smiles, "WAR is it!" Just as THE TOXIC AVENGER focuses in on the current problems of nuclear waste, WAR deals with the current popularity



of all things military," Lloyd explains. "War is popular right now. Reagan has made it so. 'Let's go to Grenada and beat their asses in!' Children are running around in Rambo gear. Women are wearing ballet belts. Men are wearing army fatigues like they used to wear jeans. Movies like *PLATOON* and *FULL METAL JACKET* also help." The film opens with a group of tourists, in a private plane, on their way to a Club Med kind of vacation. It turns out the island is inhabited by a crazed band of right-wing terrorists. They mistake the tourists for counter-revolutionaries, dispatched by Washington to terminate them. The tourists have to find a way to defend themselves and save the free world!

I've been assured by Lloyd that the gore will not disappoint. He says, "One of the most interesting FX is one of the thickest...one of the brass behind the terrorists, a Siamese twin, connected at the face. Half is military, half is industrial. Anyhow, during the course of one of the battles, he gets sliced in half with a machete!" Sources close to the editing department have told me there'll be plenty of severed limbs, squashed heads, and bodies blown away...all within the context of the story, of



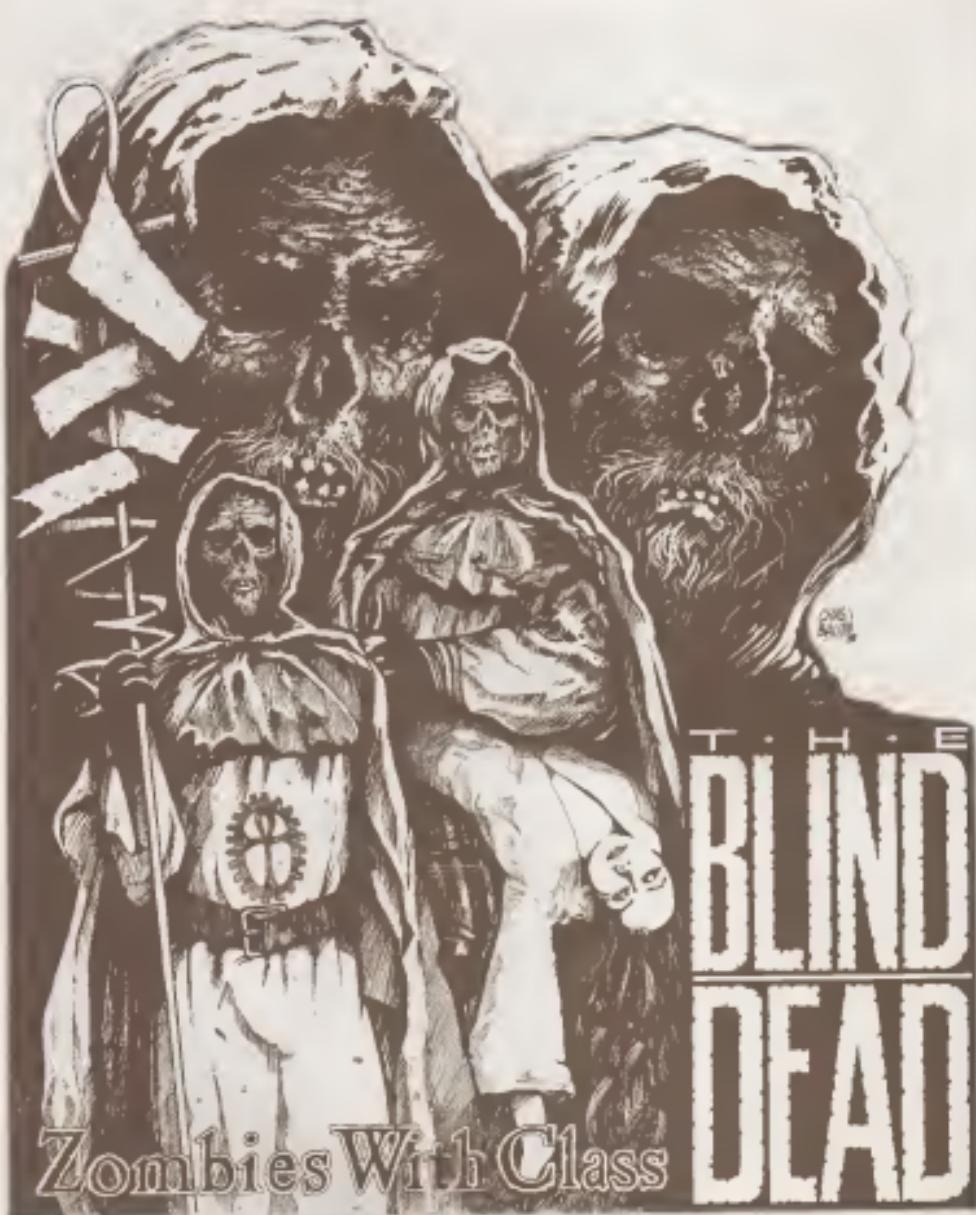


course. "I let the special FX guys go nuts! Even I'm amazed at what they came up with."

To sum up Troma's philosophy—they are in the business to entertain! Lloyd Kaufman and Michael Herz have a passion and love for what they do, and it shows. Troma, Inc. is one of exploitation's most precious gems. Best of all, they keep a dying art alive! There's no schlock like good schlock and I'm sure we can look forward to being Troma-ed for a long time. Lloyd Kaufman knows what kind of films he makes and he's damn proud of them. As I prepared to leave, Lloyd quoted The Bard by saying, "To thine own self be true." Troma is true to itself and to its fans and no matter how cheaply they make their films, they're still a class act!



Mutant love



THE BLIND DEAD SERIES

INTERVIEW with Director **AMANDO De OSSORIO**

by Dale Pierce

Dale Pierce is the author of two current novels, *THE WIND BLOWS DEATH* and *PLAY ME THE SONG OF DEATH*. Dale has lived in Arizona since 1969 and is an ardent aficionado of bullfighting and wrestling.

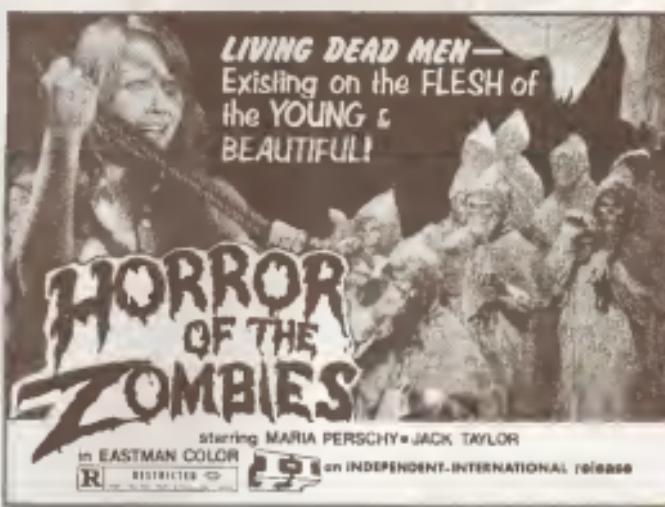
Amundo De Ossorio may not be the best known director or writer of screenplays to newer fans of the horror genre or to American fans, but in Europe he is a highly regarded, veteran film figure, noted particularly for his *BLIND DEAD* series, which dealt with a series of unseeing, zombie-like creatures wreaking destruction upon mankind, usually with graphic results. His "big three"—*TOMBS OF THE BLIND DEAD*, *HORROR OF THE ZOMBIES*, and *NIGHT OF THE SEAGULLS*—occasionally crop up on American television, usually in toped-down form, and, to an extent, have provoked interest from fans of the genre. In Europe, however, the Templars—the unseeing zombies of his films—have a much stronger cult following and the name of their creator is well known.

Living in Madrid, Spain, De Ossorio speaks no English and does business with the outside, English-speaking world through the help of a secretary, who handles translation of mail and business. Our conversation was a pleasant one, although other people in the place we were dining occasionally stopped to stare at us when De Ossorio unrolled the way the Templars jerked and twisted around. An articulate gentleman, who "looked like someone who might be involved with horror films" with that somber, slightly unshaven Lovecraft/Poe look about him, his comments lose something in translation, but are nonetheless interesting, both for fans of his *BLIND DEAD* series and for those unfamiliar with his projects, hearing of him for the first time.

DR: First off, your prime creation would have to be the Templars, who made the *BLIND DEAD* series. For those unfamiliar with these monstrosities, could you describe them?

ADO: The Templars are a cross between zombies and vampires, but are not fully either. They are a mythological group of creatures who are blind, walk very slowly, only come out at night, and use the legends of blood renewal to keep a frugal eternal life. In the films, the Templars were once a

fierce group of soldiers for the cross during the Crusades, yet during their travels outside Europe, they learned the secrets of black magic and demonic worship. While holding to Catholic beliefs by day, at night they practised witchcraft in Portugal and Spain, until they were caught and excommunicated. The Templars kept on with these practices in the black arts, until they were caught doing ritual sacrifice. They were put to death by hanging and their bodies were left outside for everyone to see. The crosses ate out their



in EASTMAN COLOR starring MARIA PERSCHY • JACK TAYLOR

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eyes, which was how they became blind.

The bodies were burned, but at night the Templars continued to rise from the dead. Rotting, petrified corpses, dressed in the costumes of the soldiers of the cross, they are unable to see, but guide themselves by sound. Even the beating of a human heart can be sensed by them. They feel their way around and are very slow in moving, but frightful to watch. One of the key elements that makes suspense build in the films is because they move so slowly and the tension mounts a step at a time. Viewers know the Templars are coming, but they have to wait and wait and wait. This makes the films all the more frightening because suspense and mounting tension is the secret to making a horror film frightening.

DR: Could you briefly summarize the *BLIND DEAD* series, starting with *TOMBS OF THE BLIND DEAD*?

ADO: In *TDMBS DF THE BLIND DEAD*, a young girl gets off a train in Portugal, after a fight with friends, and accidentally stumbles upon the Templars, camping out in the graveyard and midden where they are buried. The Templars rise from the grave and eventually kill her. They drink her blood by tearing away her flesh with their teeth and when her body is found, it is covered with large bite marks. Her friends then investigate, learn of the myth of the Templars, and meet them firsthand.

Unlike many horror films, where the good guys survive, they do not beat or defeat the Templars. The only person who survives the encounter is the girl and she is driven mad. The climax comes when the Templars board a train in which she is escaping and kill all the passengers. The train pulls into the station without an engineer and a soldier boards it to stop the train. The girl is found in the coal car, quite mad, and the film ends as the massacre in the passenger section of the train is found. The Templars are still at large at the end of the film.

DR: What about *HDRRDR OF THE ZOMBIES*?

ADO: The Templars again materialize, but in a different manner. Instead of rising from their crypts and walking or riding on horses as a grotesque army

of the dead, as seen in the other films, they circle the globe in a ghost ship, a Spanish boat. A group of people discover this ship and attempt to learn the mysteries of the Templars, but wind up being destroyed themselves. In the end, the Templars come to shore and once more are left at large, as the film ends with all the heroes killed.

DR: The last and most popular of your series would be *NIGHT DF THE SEAGULLS*. In this, the special effects were better and there were some changes. Could you talk about these and the plot of the film?

ADO: Thus time, a group of devil worshippers are making sacrifices to the Templars and the actual ritual is shown, where the human heart is torn out of

a woman's breast. In this film, strangers once again stalk the Templars and are placed in danger by them; but in the end, these creatures are finally outwitted. Although they die with the rising sun, there is still no conclusive end and some day, once more, the Templars might rise. Although the film concludes with a hint that the reign of the Templars ends, this is not definite.

DR: What do you consider to be the most unique element of the Templars? After all, there have been many vampire, zombie, and undead pictures. What makes the Templars so unique?

ADO: Their blindness, most definitely. To appreciate this, you have to see the film in the theater more than in video or television. Is the theater,



PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF ADO PRODUCTIONS

the people watching panic when they see the people on the screen face the Templars and start to scream. You keep wanting to shout at the people in the film, "Be quiet, don't make noise, or they're going to get you!" Like I said, the Templars are sensitive to sound, with this supernatural sense. They hear the breathing, the heartbeat, and especially the human voice and they react. They jerk around and start for where the noise comes from. (Here is where he did his Templar imitation, which prompted some stares.) Because they are blind, they move very slowly, which is one of their weak points. Once they get you, however, you're as good as dead. I know there have been many vampire films, zombie films, and the like, but I believe the Templars to be unique. They are not vampires nor ghosts nor zombies, but a combination of all these things.

DR: Where were the graveyard scenes shot in the *BLIND DEAD* series? Where was the temple of the Templars?

ADO: The footage was shot at the Monasterio Celcon in the province of Madrid, Spain.

DR: The music also does a great deal to set the mood for your *BLIND DEAD* series. Who composed the music?

ADO: I assume you are thinking of the main theme that you hear throughout the three pictures, the one with the slow, systematic chanting, right? That was composed by Antonio Peris Altrial, and in Europe, it has been as closely associated with the central theme for the Templars as has the familiar James Bond music for the 007 series and the whistling in the Italian westerns. The music, in the case of the *BLIND DEAD* series, was perfect. It set the mood because the tune was so sinister sounding. It was sacrificial music, created to make the movie all the more intense and to make the Templars all the more sinister.

DR: You mentioned the western films from Italy and the music. Why is it these films aren't being made any longer? Is it simply no longer in demand, with horror replacing the western?

ADO: It is not just a fall in demand that keeps people from making westerns anymore. It is also the high cost of production. One big expense is

the cost for the rental of horses. In westerns, you use many, many horses sometimes. The cost for this is astronomical, sometimes costing even a higher price than it costs to hire some of the actors. Economics is one of the main reasons why no one is making westerns anymore and most producers have switched to other themes. The horror theme has always been popular, not just in Europe, but around the world.

DR: You aren't limited just to writing or directing horror films are you?

ADO: No, of course not. I just finished a picture recently, but it is not horror. I have made films in Italy, Spain, Portugal, and other countries and not all of them have been horror, but it is for the *BLIND DEAD* series that I am best known. I was even in America once, working on a picture. Even though I do not speak English, I had no trouble getting around or getting things done because I was in Miami, Florida and there I found a lot of people knew how to speak Spanish. I did not have the problem I thought I was going to have at first.

DR: Do you feel on an international level that Spain has been overlooked as an important cultural center for art such as literature and film. Other countries such as France and Italy tend to be more romantic, so to speak, when it comes to the arts.

ADO: This is not true because Spain has long been an important cultural center that has produced not only many fine film stars, writers, poets, and other personalities, but also draws the artists to it like a magnet. In the center of town is a very famous dining establishment called El Callejon, which is famous because all of the film personalities who visit Spain eat and drink there. It was once frequented by Ernest Hemingway, the American writer, and by many other people. There are many other bars and meeting places where artists in various fields hang out. Spain is just as cultured, if not more cultured, than any of these other countries. It is also an important center for the film industry in Europe.

DR: Going back to the Templars once more. How was the makeup done?

ADO: After eating, you can visit studios and see some of the props, scale models, and other things used for these and other films. (I did and it was fascinating.) I can explain everything there. Makeup credit for the *BLIND DEAD*, you can get right off the credits of the film. The makeup man was Carlos Parada.

DR: You are very enthusiastic about special effects aren't you?

ADO: The special effects or the lack of them can also be a decisive factor in what makes or breaks a film. Special effects now are far better than ever and I personally love to experiment with new techniques to use in film, dealing with these effects. The *BLIND DEAD* series gets better and better with each sequel, starting with the sacrifice scenes in *NIGHT OF THE SEAGULLS*, where human hearts are ripped out during the sacrifice scenes, and in the end when the Templars are dying, as they fall through the ground and blood comes out of their skeleton mouths, noses, and empty eye sockets. Techniques have become even more advanced since then. Certainly, the world of special effects continues to make advances, getting better and better all the time. I, personally, place a lot of emphasis on special effects, because that is one of the main points the audience is looking for in these times. The better the special effects, the larger the crowd. Sometimes it is the special effects in itself that will make a movie popular. People watch the film and marvel at the realism. You can really tell when you've got a good film when you take the impossible and have the people sitting in the theatre forgetting about reality and believing, for the moment, what they are seeing. When you have them caught up in that momentary fantasy, when they are one with the action on the screen, you know you've done your job well as a director.

DR: Do you have any future plans or projects you would like to talk about concerning film?

ADO: Just keep watching the advertisements and you should be seeing some new works by me shortly. That is all I will say.



THOU SHALT NOT KILL EXCEPT



"... WHEN VIOLENCE
DEMANDS REVENGE."

ARTICLE AND INTERVIEW BY CHAS. BALUN

In Joe McGinniss' best-selling book, *Fatal Vision*, the central figure, one Dr. Jeffrey McDonald, remembers his family's murderers as freaked-out hippies, druggies who chanted "acid is groovy, kill the pig" over and over. And, by golly, that sure sounded patently absurd to anyone who'd had some cells fried by chemicals and suddenly realized he couldn't even find his own dick, let alone carry out a level-headed conspiracy to mass murder. Yet, absurd indeed, that is until THOU SHALT NOT KILL...EXCEPT. Sam Raimi's wild n' crazy cult leader is one of the guys McDonald was talking about! Any fucker who would turn an Gramps into a human dartboard, kill a lovable dog named "Whiskey," and skewer him over a BBQ spit would certainly have no trouble at all handling both horror and hallucinogens. Not this guy. Raimi's wickedly delicious portrayal as a Manson-like psycho-asafit helps recall the Age of Acid Fascism in all its pained putrescence.

Raimi's acting talents are really but a small entitlement to see this energetic, brashly-paced, hell-bent-for-splatter gem that succeeds on so many levels that you wonder why its makers haven't already been canonized in the Church of New Blood.

The film opens in Vietnam, 1969, with actual location footage shot by co-writer Sheldon Lettich, who also served as second-unit director and technical advisor. "He was in 'Nam," producer-writer Scott Spiegel explains. "We used some footage from a short film he'd done called FIRE FIGHT." This segment serves as the prologue, as the rest of the film was shot in and around Detroit during an on/off four-month schedule and brought to release print for around \$250,000. The microbudget is easily offset by the uniformly strong ensemble acting, the crisp, profane dialog, and the strong action sequences which climax in a bloodbath worthy of Sam Peckinpah.

Don't be misled. Although this film was done on the cheap, its technical credits are of a high order and this looks like a REAL movie. In many ways, it's like a twisted PLATOON meets THE HILLS HAVE EYES. Rambo vs. Charles Manson.

Producer Scott Spiegel, who also wrote EVIL DEAD 2, says the actual



production was "a numbing experience in guerrilla filmmaking. We would beg, borrow, and steal, but I knew we just had to do it. It was intense, but one heck of a learning experience."

Spiegel hails from Detroit and is part of the Motor City gang which includes both Sam and Ted Raimi, along with old chum, Bruce Campbell. "Sam and Bruce and I always did Super 8 movies," Spiegel says. "We couldn't get anybody else so we acted in 'em. Bruce is really the only serious actor. Sam and I were always too busy writing, producing, and directing these short flicks."

Spiegel remembers his first horror film was shot in 1969 when he was ten years old. "We showed the films at our clubhouse down by the beach and people liked them. They wanted us to keep doing 'em."

Well, that's still true now, some 20

years later. Spiegel has just wrapped principal photography on *NIGHT CREW*, a film he wrote and directed, which again features appearances by Sam and Ted Raimi, Bruce Campbell, and Danny Hicks (*EVIL DEAD 2*). The elaborate and gory FX were handled by Tom Savini's old crew of Greg Nicotero, Robert Kurtzman, and Howard Berger. "They whipped up some really first-class effects in a very short amount of time," says Spiegel. "Really intense stuff. We're going for an "R" rating for theatrical release and a triple "X" on video."

After his experience with *THOU SHALT NOT KILL*, Spiegel realized, "It was very difficult to market a picture like that, but we felt to really get into the hardcore cult world we had to make it unrated and make it as horrifying as possible."

THOU SHALT NOT KILL will get your attention right away, too, with a

splendid purji-attack impalement (a la DR. BUTCHER, M.D.) and a turf-bag bullet hit that sends one guy's brains out the back of his head and smack onto another's face. Though released unrated, Spiegel explains that one sequence proved too unsettling for nearly everyone and was excised from the final print, much to his chagrin.

"It's one of my favorite gags in the whole movie," Spiegel enthuses. "Everybody thought it too disgusting except Sam, Bruce, and I. We said, 'No, keep it in!'" During a vicious, well-choreographed bar fight scene, one of the marines, doing battle with a biker gang member, is punched hard in the stomach. "He pulses in one of the biker's helmets," Spiegel relates. "When they leave, one of the big bikers gets up, says 'Motherfucker, you'll rot in hell,' and puts on the helmet. Gags of cream come and vomit just cover his head. Really funny—I thought—kind of taking a *THREE STOOGES* gag and making it really sick."

Robert Richardson, Bruce Spoltore, Tim Goff,
and John Marchese

NIGHT CREW

THE FINAL CHECKOUT

The Director of "Evil Dead" is the Co-Star. The Co-Writer of "Evil Dead 2" is the Director. And the sum of the parts are more than the horror of the whole.

TITAN PRODUCTIONS PRESENTS "NIGHT CREW: THE FINAL CHECKOUT"
WRITTEN BY ELIZABETH COLE, RANDY RICKS, DAVID BRUNER, KENNY LEVINE, AND SAM RAMIS. ASST. DIRECTOR
TOM LEEVER, AND ERIC SAVITA. SPECIAL EFFECTS OF THE FILM: GREGG NEUTZLER. ROBERT KURTZMAN AND
RICHARD JEROME, EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS. BRIANNA BAXELLA, PRODUCER. STYLING BY FERNANDO VILLELLA. EDITORS
ROBERT LIPSHIZ, SCOTT SPIEGEL, PRODUCTION DESIGNER: LAWRENCE REINER. CINEMATOGRAPHY: SCOTT SPIEGEL.
MUSIC BY SCOTT SPIEGEL. PRODUCTION DESIGNER: LAWRENCE REINER. CINEMATOGRAPHY: SCOTT SPIEGEL.

The bike gang was composed of actual bikers who were none too keen on coming out second best in a bar fight, either. They were the greatest guns," Spiegel remembers. "But a little scary. They were scared all bent out of shape about the fight. 'No way, we could never kick our ass!' We said, 'Well, in this movie, they do!'"

"THOU SHALT NOT KILL" remains a solid, highly-charged effort, propelled by fluid, inventive camerawork, a stirring musical score by Joseph Lo Duca, and a well-executed revenge scenario that manages to avoid the usual clichés.

In other words, it kicks ass.

DEEP RED says "Thou Shall See This Film."

Gwen Goffe and Robert Kurtzman

Chas. Balun

NINTH & HELL STREET

From the forthcoming novel to be published by Fawcett Enterprises

Easter Sunday—3:23 a.m.

Stephen paused, collected himself, and began laughing in flushed tones. He would have never imagined that it could be thus easy. Within only minutes, he was to become a saint in a new faith; sacrificial blood would wash away the last vestiges of the weak, cowardly, mawkishly sentimental being he was once. "Are you looking for Stephen, the blessed one?" an angel intoned. "He is not here. He has risen."

Indeed, his whole being felt light, heady with transcendence and newly-awakened power. "I shall break these bonds that keep me from knowing the truth of all things." This morning, being a High Holy Day amongst practicing Christians, was certainly a most apt metaphor for his own resurrection taking place right now, at this very instant. He felt warmth rising, crawling upwards along his spine and towards his brain. "Almost too simple," he thought, but then, that was the way he used to think.

He knew Lynette, his loving and ever faithful wife of twelve, or was it thirteen, years would be dead to the world at this time of morning. He would've chuckled out loud at his little witticism except he was absolutely not the same person any longer. Nettie, his affectionate nickname for his beloved, had just recently been drinking herself to sleep at night, nearly every night

now, too. She took an occasional Valium or Second capsules, too, so she'd most likely sleep through the worst of what was about to happen. Well, most of it anyway.

He moved quietly down the hall, stooping to pick up the claw hammer Nettie had left alongside the toy chest she'd been building for Matthew, their six-year-old. Nettie was always good with tools, good with her hands, artistic even. She could script, build practical things for the kids, and play a passable bit of piano.

Big deal. That was then.

He entered Cynthia's room, their little blond, blue-eyed, eight-year-old, kissed the back of her head gently, cupped his hand over her mouth, and clasped his grey staff out her ears and all over her Princess Leia pillowcase. Only a very slight, high rattle, a whimpers, gurgling noise escaped from her seddoring lips. She lay silent now, still forever.

Further down the hall now, and swiftly into Matt's room, repeating the procedure, only twisting the blowhearts of the ferocious struggle put up after the first one. Good boy, a real fighter, just like his old man.

His clothing, sprayed with blood, and odd bits of skull, connecting tissues, and flecks of brain matter was beginning to stick to his flesh. It felt warm. Good. He felt more alive now than he had ever felt before in his 47 years. The power, the incredible brightness of everything, the new vision was altogether intoxicating. Magnificent.

He entered the master bedroom. Nettie was snoring softly and sweetly, and obviously hadn't been disturbed in the least by the sacrifice. Now, this was going to be a bit more complicated—not nearly as easy as the children. He set the hammer down on the floor and re-adjusted the two pairs of surgeon's gloves he was wearing. A slight tear in the left index finger, nothing to worry about, though he was glad he'd decided on the extra pair.

He moved purposefully over to the closet as three or four strides and reached way back behind the suits, boxes, and assorted clutter to a secret place of which only he knew. His gloved hand emerged with a holstered,

shiny, nickel-plated .357 magnum with an eight-inch barrel. Never even been fired. "A first time for everything," he stated, "Today especially."

He sheepishly looked up and into the bussiness mirror, admiring his reflection. "Quite the sight you are, Stephen. The blood of the innocents hideously tattooing your body in raggedy patterns, clutching a handgun and about to kill your wife. Yes, you never looked better, old boy."

"Nettie," he called, "Heaven can't wait any longer, dear." She didn't hear him. She wouldn't have heard him even had he shot the kids. Must have definitely been the Valkans along with about a pint and a half of gin, judging by the bedside evidence. He had to get her up and into that chair in front of the mirror. I mean, you don't just club your kids to death and then go crawling off to bed, for cripesakes. He shook her again, whispering in her ear, murmuring the words only lovers use at the time of loving.

She had almost begun to awaken, but it was quite obvious by her slow, deep breathing patterns and her inert state that now she was back to being peacefully unconscious. He forgot good bedside manners, threw the covers off, and grasped her beneath the neck and knees, preparing to lift and carry her, gentleman-lover style, over to the best seat in the house.

"Hoa, wake up," he cooed. "Jesus has rolled away the stone and he wants to see YOU, here, today, right now!" He got a good grip on his precious Nettie and easily lifted her from the bed. His strength seemed to multiply rapidly, almost as if he was absorbing all of the life around him.

They never told him it would be this...this wonderful. He felt so full of life, so renewed. He wanted to live forever like this. If only he could tear his flesh from his bones and release the beautiful spirit willing within him. If only. But soon, that, too.

He got Nettie over to the bureau and into the chair easily enough, but now, she was beginning to wake up and feebly murmur his name. "Stephen, what..." she began, but dropped away again into her drugged slumber, her head rolling about for just a bit longer.

Her head was tilted back, her eyes closed buried in her chest, and then, they exchanged breathless, open mouths.

He snatched down another cigarette, lit it, smoked it again, and stopped his fingers from reaching for her hair. He drew it gently to the floor, the only seconds required to release her again. He firmly pressed his body against hers, she struggled to hold him off, at least till he would release her, her grip relaxed and the fingers left the floor once again.

Easy. Like it.

He placed the cigarette in his hand and guided it up towards her mouth, gently parting her lips with the barrel as it slid into her. He looked up, to the mirror, and couldn't help but

warily averted his eyes, seeing specie being reflected back at him. It was not pernicious, not sickening nor death he saw, but one dead, grey, silent being and one other about to come into life.

God, but something was coming inside him now, he was sure of it, something beautiful, strong, pure. He did, whatever it was waiting inside him, would eat him now and free his newborn spirit from its earthly, corporeal prison.

He wangled Nettie to beat wings to his steamer into heaven, to see the beautiful thing he was to become with her help. He shook her again and again, though never hard enough to make the two bodies collide with their teeth and fangs her uncessantly. "Nettie, oh Nettie, dear. Remember Jesus, God is good." Finally, she stiffened slightly and her eyelids fluttered open for just an instant. He could see by her reaction that she'd taken in at least part of this bizarre ceremony he was about to complete.

"Nettie, dear," he purred, "God speaks." Still firmly clutching her hand to his, he ducked to one side and depressed the trigger. The report was muted somewhat by her mouth, but the searing and bloody wind that blew her brains out the top of her head made a wet, violent whooshing sound rarely heard by the human ear.

Her skull, brain, and bits of other unnameable soft pink things rained

down, and down, and down. In front, his hand, another plasma capacitor and generator, arced to go with the fury rain. He bent under and dipped his bare torso into the copious pools of blood and fluids now spouting everywhere and brought his hand, to the armpit. He helped his spirit a final message to the material world.

At last satisfied, he freed and released her hand several times to the bloody puddle, he was aware of the urges of the subversive gods passing through his body. God it is thought he might explode from the divine energy building within.

He looked one last time into the mirror, replaced the pistol-back in his beloved's hand, and silently agreed with the drooping letters consoling on the silvered pane: "He has risen." Suddenly, fainter and brighter than he could have ever imagined, his reflection in the mirror was replaced by a shimmering pillar of fire, enveloping his body with the searing flames of retribution. It was a fire without heat, without pain, blinding and mesmerizing. He was come in embrace. He knew now all. It was really true. He was on his way.

By this time, the throng had eaten through his optic nerves and into the softness of his mind, releasing synaptic rashes of vibrant, highly-charged hallucinations that swiftly overwhelmed his rapidly eroding cognitions. But it wasn't the holy, cleansing fire he'd just imagined. Nothing quite that sanctifying.

The rotted hands pouted from his eyes, nose, mouth, wriggling in tentaculous waves tens of thousands millions. They begin to gather at his feet in pulsing, animated heaps of what appeared to be bloodied piles of, now somehow alive and forever multiplying, Moggyts.

Stephen didn't even gag at the mouthful of vomita; they'd already eaten his tongue, larynx, esophagus, and everything else from his bulbous up.

A sudden gushing stream erupted from between his legs and his entire body seemed to collapse-to implode even as he sank into the unholly resurrection belching floridly at his feet.

He was -indeed, transformed; as promised.

(To be continued.)

LOVE and MURDER are the two consuming passions of the Rue Morgue



SAMUEL Z. KAPRASOFF
and
JAMES H. NICHOLSON
DIRECTED

JASON ROBARDS

Edgar Allan Poe's masterpiece of the grotesque!

Murders
IN THE Rue Morgue

CHRISTINE KAUFMANN
HERBERT LOM ADOLFO CELI

MICHAEL DUNN

LILI PALMER

GORE SCOREBOARD

THE RATING SYSTEM



- 1 skull bow-wow
- 2 skulls nearly worthless
- 3 skulls ordinary
- 4 skulls solid & scary
- 5 skulls hard core horror

(SS) Steve Bassette, (GB) Greg Goodsell; (DL) Dave Last, Jr.; (SM) Sam Moffitt; (GR) Graham Ray

REST IN PIECES (1987)
d: Joseph Brannigan



In this neck of the woods, we are accustomed to flicks with amateur and slipshod technical values, with casts of nobodies under the scripting and direction of blithering incompetents. *REST IN PIECES* offers the refreshing change of high professional gloss, with ensemble performances from well-known character actors, under the scripting and direction of blithering incompetents. Amidst all the familiar faces from movie and TV land is a story so bad we're left to wonder if the writers wrote the dialogue on the back of paper towels.

To what: a young couple are bequeathed a stately manor from the girl's eccentric aunt (Dorothy Malone). Somewhere at the house is a secreted fortune of 8 million smackers. Eccentric borders live in houses scattered across the estate free of charge. (Surrealism comes into play here. The "stately manor" is a ranch house and the "houses scattered across the estate"

are, in actuality, suburban tract homes along a street.) They include a loony priest, a promiscuous maid, a Nam gardener, an evil doctor, an even more evil blind man, and a lesbian (LIQUID SKY's Party Shepard) named Gertrude Stein. Things get weird when it's discovered they're all actually dead, part of a weird suicide cult. But it gets even weirder when it turns out that they're not actually dead, but part of a plot to drive the heroine insane to get her inheritance.

Weirdier still is when we find out it's actually a plot to... Zzzzzzzz.

Heroine Lorin Jean Vall exposes her breasts at the drop of a decapitated head, but *REST IN PIECES'* brave challenge against standard notions of cinematic syntax is just like totally dullsville, ma-am. "This place is really strange" "No it's not. It's just boring" (GG)

DEATH FACES IV (1988)
aka **DEATH FACES**



The Gore Score

This evaluation deals with nothing but the quantity of blood, brains, guts, and assorted precious bodily fluids spilled during the course of the film. It's quite simple, really. *THE BAD NEWS BEARS GO TO JAPAN* would get a big, fat zero in the Gore Score category, while *DR. BUTCHER, M.D.* and *MANIAC* would most likely receive juicy morsels or tentacles.



MARY POPPINS, DUMBO, and **TERMS OF ENDEARMENT**



BLOODSUCKING FREAKS,
THE EVIL DEAD, and **THE GATES OF HELL**

ymorous makers of *DEATH FACES* stick to titles that forewarn that the next New Guinea tribal footage contains "really boring wedding" shots. Not nearly funny stuff, dudes.

The narrator says proceeds from *DEATH FACES* will go to the Missing Children's Fund as he hurriedly ends the tape—RIP Productions. We are out a couple of dollars as these sideshow barkers hit the next burg. Cheap, no scenes of people dying horribly in front of our bone entertainment systems. I'm calling Consumer Report! (GG)

MONDO TRASHO (1969)



MULTIPLE MANIACS (1970)
d: John Watson



One of the saddest footnotes to the death earlier this year of Divine, Baltimore's finest 300-lb. female impersonator, was the re-release of all his old classics he made with director chum John Watson. *PINK FLAMINGOS* (1972), *FEMALE TROUBLE* (1974), and *POLYESTER* (1981) have been available in soft-



wave form for several years. The big news is the recent availability of MONDO TRASHO (1969) and MULTIPLE MANIACS (1970) to the home video market. Features rarely seen even on the repertory film circuit.

The Iris Harris Gleam Millstead was never more glamorous as Lady Divine in MULTIPLE MANIACS. Directly inspired by equal amounts of Herschell Gordon Lewis and Charles Manson, Waters refers to MANIACS as his "mean one." Divine is the dyevane of her Travelling Cavalcade of Perversion, exhibiting freaks, dykes, junkies and fags to bored suburbanites prior to robbing them at gun point. Keeping her puny-whipped paramour Mr. David (David Lochary) under her thumb by insisting that he was responsible for the Tate-LaBianca massacre ("I saw what you did! P-L-G!"), Lochary seeks solace in the arms of a blushing blonde floozy (Mary Vivian Pearce). This inspires La Divine into new heights of depravity, culminating in gay murder, cannibalism, dismemberment, rape by giant lobster, and the Stations of the Cross enacted by drag queens and leaves of Wonder Bread. Divine is gowned down by the national guard as we hear Kate Smith sing "God Bless America."

MANIACS has enough over-the-top stuff to satiate the most jaded gorehound. Reading about John Waters' films are one thing; seeing them is a genuinely shocking experience.

MONDO TRASHO, an earlier effort, may disappoint. Silent, with a soundtrack consisting of old rock 'n' roll, radio commercials, and sound effects (Waters' homage to Kenneth Anger's SCORPIO RISING), TRASHO tells the

meat-eating story of a fashion freak (Mary Vivian Pearce again) accidentally killed by an incarnation of Jayne Mansfield (Divine in spike heels and silver lame halter top). Divine rather Pearce to good ol' Dr. Cuthanger (Locharay) when she is resurrected with chicken feet transplanted on the end of her legs. Divine has numerous visions of the Virgin Mary in laundromats before once again being riddled with bullets and dies crawling through a muddy pigeon TRASHO is a masterpiece for Waters and Divine completists, while less sympathetic viewers may readily agree with the title before hitting their Eject button.

Divine/Mansfield seems poised on the brink of mainstream acceptance before being untimely snatched away March 7, 1988 due to heart failure. For an individual so obsessed with recognition, he called away so prematurely makes one truly ponder the existence of Deity. (GG)

DEMON OF PARADISE (1987)

d: Cris H. Santiago



Weak, wimpy, and totally derivative Hawaiian CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON droppings from the director of the equally un-inspired YAMPIRE HOOKERS and EQUALIZIR 2000, Akos, a bristly, dog-faced, scaly humanoid with a saurian tail, is described as a "cannibalistic lizardman of the Triassic Age, the missing link between reptiles and early primates (!?)" with the typically suspect paleontology and Darwinism that passes for science in monster movies like this one. The rest is the usual post-JAWS pastiche of dead fishermen, paraded populse, opportun-

istic shirt owner, tight-lipped, ineffectual lawman, exploding boats, etc (Akos even unashamedly yanks a "cooter into the drink in a ridiculous sequence lifted from JAWS 2.) Competent, hideous filmmaking by-the-numbers TV movie-style (with the nominal 'R' rating justified by a very brief skinny-dip, single use of the word "fuck," and the slow-mo exploding monster climax), without a second of originality or inspiration to disrupt the tedium. The end hints at a sequel, suggesting reptilian regenerative powers as we see a bloodied Akos borne away by the current. Spare us, Cris. (SB)

NORMAL NURDELICK'S "SUSPENSION" (1973)

d: Bob Dahlin



If the opportunity arises, do not miss this rarely-seen, black-and-white student short that ruthlessly parodies Alfred Hitchcock's movie. Rates a mention here for its shockingly gory send-up of the classic PSYCHO shower-murder with a hilarious, splattery death by knife, plunger, toaster, etc., in the bathtub. There are further antics with the bloody corpse amidst the satirical references to classic sequences from REAR WINDOW, VERTIGO, etc. Dahlin completed this little cocker before Brian DePalma's similar borrowings from Hitchcock began with SISTERS (also '73), and four years before Mel Brooks' Hitch-parody HIGH ANXIETY; seen today, it's even more on target as a parody of DePalma and other Hitchcock imitators. Award-winner at the 1973 Eighth New York Independent Filmmakers Exposition International, where judge Rex Reed awarded all of his portion of the award dollars

to Dahlin's short.

Recommended, if you can find it! (SB)

HEADLESS EYES (1971)

d: Kent Peterson



Wizard Video's packaging and pressbooks proclaim this a made-for-home-video movie. Don't believe it. HEADLESS EYES sports a 1971 copyright date and looks to have been shot on 16mm, most of it handheld, grainy, and underlit. But that's no reason not to check it out; this is one of those oddball finds that makes home video so interesting at times.

Bo Brundin plays a starving artist who turns to burglary in the first few minutes of the film. A woman catches him in the act and in the ensuing struggle, pops out one of his eyeballs with a spoon. He falls out a window, down the fire escape, and lands in the street with the eyeball hanging on his cheek. Unconcerned New Yorkers stand and gawk.

Later, wearing an eyepatch, he starts offing women and popping out their eyeballs with a spoon he carries in a little silk pouch. He makes sculpture by encasing the eyes in lace and displays them in a storefront gallery. This guy Brundin gives an uncomfortably realistic performance of a total psychopath. Screeching, sweating, and apologizing profusely to his victims, even as he yanks their eyes out, this is one crazy character.

In the style of other low budget horrors (THE HONEYMOON KILLERS and CRIMINALLY INSANE come to mind) the movie is filled with grotesque characters. Especially fine are an unaged TV news

reporter, a bust-out police detective, and a little old lady who cackles at the deranged artist "I know who did it! I know who did it!"

Seeing this goofy old bazzard is alone worth the price of admission. It's no classic, but HEADLESS EYES has got a truly creepy atmosphere and decent enough performances to make it worthwhile. The gore score is pretty high for something made in 1971. Also particularly disgusting are long scenes of Brundin finding his little treasures and spouting bizarre dialog. Worth a look. (SM)

GOREMET: ZOMBIE CHEF FROM HELL (1986)

d. Don Swan



No offends meant to the filmmakers, but that is a really scary piece of shit. Tedious nonsense lacks even rudimentary shocks, suspense or characterizations as it stumbles through a barely coherent narrative concerning Geza (Theo Deyup), a priest of the Holy Order of the Righteous Brotherhood who is accused of treachery back in 1386, and casted with living death sustained by the consumption of human flesh. Six hundred years later, the brotherhood and their High Priests turn up at the Geza Dell and Beach Club to put an end to Geza's nasty ways, supergluing his lips together and nailing his feet to the floor until he starves to death.

Geza periodically pontificates to the camera, while non-actors playing Axar, Blister, Lenox, and various customers shuffle through the boozing rubber limbs and lame cannibal jokes accompanied by monotonous synthesized music. It's all meant as a parody (the High Priestess deals death to Geza

saying, "Brother Geza, you've lost that loving feeling!" Get it? The Righteous Brothers...ah ha). But, producer/director Swan has nothing but contempt for the story, the film, the genre, and the audience. So fuck you too, buddy. Definitely give this one a miss. (SB)

RANA, THE LEGEND OF SHADOW LAKE (1981)

d. Bill Rebake



A nice attempt at an old-fashioned monster movie, RANA has the look of a serious-minded, amateur movie. Unfortunately, the amateur cast just about undoes the whole project.

The photography is really nice with lots of twilight shots of the tide lake. And Rebake has the good sense not to show too much of the rather disappointing frogman monster.

The entire movie is related in flashback by a guy who was a kid when Rana the frogman slaughtered his family and a lot of loggers. There are some decent gore effects here; especially good is one of the loggers getting his face mashed into the trunk of a tree.

The atmosphere of creepy woods and mist-shrouded lake water with the very real suggestion of "something" being out there is terrific. In fact, so much care went into this production, that I hate like hell to say it, but once Rana makes his appearance, it's all downhill. All the acting is uniformly wooden, except for Jerry Graci as "Charlie," the cliché crazy-old-coot who-knows-exactly-what's-going-on.

Also on the plus side, the two young ladies in the cast look terrific in bathing suits, but

you can't get around the phoniness of that monster. A nice try, but next time get a better suit, guys. (SM)

MIRROR OF DEATH (1987)

d. Deryo Warren



Competently made and earnestly performed, but rapid and completely derivative thriller about possession and demon-infested mirrors. Handled better in Paul Wendkos' 1959 FEAR NO EVIL and Ulli Lommel's quirky THE BOOGIE MAN. Self-loathing, guilt-ridden, boyfriend tortured Sam (Julie Merril) finds a Haitian voodoo handbook in her sister's apartment and performs a candle-lit ritual before a mirror, becoming beautiful once she's possessed by the succubus Sam. This yields great results on the singles scene, and a steamy shower sex scene, but just try touching her candles or writing a love note on the mirror, and you're dead meat, throat torn out, eyes peeled, a thumping heart ripped out. Initially interesting, but quickly becomes repetitive and soft possession/exorcism, complete with the usual contact lens and levitation effects, until the dialogue and situations become more and more ludicrous...right up to the obvious, top-out conclusion. Shock but empty, despite the efforts of all involved, the story is hopelessly stupid and transparent, screwing 'em from the start. (SB)

TRANCE (1977)

d. Eckhart Schmidt



Don't let the low gore score deceive you—this is seriously sick shit here. Weird cardio carries the frightening premise of THE KING OF COMEDY and the horrible

reality of the Lennox murder to truly fucked up extremes. Slow, static, calculated but tortuously obsessive German film about the ultimate group experience: young female fat (Doris Nostrach) insanely fixated on the narcissistic pop star 'R' (Bodo Stanger) to the exclusion of all else. She meets him, pursues him, meets him, pants his confidence, and fucks him. The enmity of her fantasies are too great for mere sexual consummation to satisfy her, however; and when he goes to leave, she brains him, laying with his body before cutting it up and methodically devouring him completely. Disturbing code finds her back at home with her head shaved, apparently pregnant and fantasizing about giving birth to a little 'R'-bum. Look for this in the adult tapes. Difficult to find, but definitely worth seeking out. Any further information about this film would be welcomed! (SB)

CARNAGE (1983)

d. Andy Milligan



Recent Milligan feature came as a surprise to me. I didn't think Andy was making 'em anymore. Well, shit howdy, he still is, working with Lew Miskin, son of his old producer William Miskin, and the result is painfully familiar. Short from a five-page outline entitled HILL HOUSE, the film begins with a wedding and suicide pact. Another newlywed couple buys the house this occurred in, with the expected poltergeist activities, bloodied spectres, gory deaths, and attempted exorcism culminating in tragedy. Superficially, it's heads and tails above vintage Milligan like TORTURE DUNGEON, THE BLOODYTHIRSTY BUTCHERS, THE GHASTLY ONES,



THE BODY BENEATH, and THE RATS ARE COMING, THE WEREWOLFS ARE HERE, though I miss the engagingly caustic misanthropy of those members' wretched early efforts. Hell, nobody bitches at one another until twenty minutes into the film, and there isn't a lurchback in sight! The peeing and storytelling is as disguised as ever, but the tale is too simple to be confused by Milligan's approach.

Cinematography is much sharper than the usual 70's Milligan stuff, but it's still completely desipan, as is his direction, editing, and abysmally crude (if often bloody) effects work. For Milligan devotees only, who'll probably long for the ragtag sleaze edge of his old shit. All others will find it too empty and tedious to stay with. (SB)

BEETLE JUICE (1988)

d: Tim Burton



Absolutely brilliant, original horror/fantasy/comedy creates its own crazy-quilt world that also happens to be the funniest (and bleakest) vision of the afterlife ever committed to film. The story's bare bones suggests a melding of TOPPER and THE ADDAMS FAMILY... newly dead couple find they are unable to leave their home, with only a confusing Guide For The Recently Deceased to help them, and their house occupied by a family of new owners they find unbearable. Their attempts to scare the new tenants out fail, and they enlist the aid of the Bro-Exorcist Bettegeuse (Michael Keaton's most manic and inspired performance, a demented nerve-jangling refuge from Tex Avery's cartoon universe) with dubious results. Michael McDowell and Warren Stevens's script quickly

composes its own unpredictable internal logic, with horror author McDowell's hand evident, especially in the ruthless parody of the family unit barely held together by its own madness. Burton's remarkable integration of live action, model animation, and on-camera effects is exhilarating and continuously yanks the rug out from under your feet. His bag of tricks seems bottomless, but there remains an insidious method to his madness that puts him a step or two ahead of smaller mischief-makers like Raoul and Diane at this point. You haven't lived until you've been in the Afterlife Waiting Room!

Recommended. (SB)

IT'S ALIVE III: ISLAND OF THE ALIVE (1986/88)

d: Larry Cohen



"Shoot 'em from the hip" Larry Cohen is still at it! Zany opening and some fascinating concepts and extrapolations on his 1973 original give way to an erratically paced, scattershot film that seems to shift gears every 15 minutes. The few surviving IT'S ALIVE infants are ruled human enough to be called to an island paradise to live out their days. Four years later, one of the parents (Michael Moriarty) and a team of scientists return to the island, inadvertently leading to the creatures' return to mainland Florida.

The panned focus of the first two films dissolves into more of Cohen's playful indulgence of actor Monarcy, as in Q (to good effect) and THE STUFF (oops). Some of the characterization is compelling, especially in the courtroom opening and later sequences with a hooper who picks him up, only to spurn him in revulsion when she

recognizes him as the father of one of the monster infants. Monarcy's performance soon lapses into annoying mannerism and self-conscious parody as the film unwinds, undermining our involvement with his character or the story. Monarcy's best performance for Cohen remains his first, where he sublimated his camera-conscious hamming for a genuine bit of acting to create the memorable lover in Q (1982).

The effective sequences show how powerful the film could have been with tighter script, direction, and focus on the premise without all the tangents and detours. Perhaps Cohen just can't believe in his own story enough to keep a straight face. While it's still a nasty action, Cohen doesn't even try for suspension of disbelief at this point, embracing it as a silly, but entertaining, spin-off of the serious attempt the original and its first sequel represent. As with all his recent films, Cohen's quirky flashes of gutty wit and intelligence hardly hold this confection together; it continually threatens to fly apart any second. His New York/Hollywood guerrilla style of filmmaking does allow him to do his own work, his own way, with often excellent use of location shooting (including, here, fine use of Hawaiian locations) and scanty economy (Cuba is seen only as a hospital corridor and a few Cuban-looking extras). This approach just as often betrays his own best ideas and intentions with its rag-tag patchwork nature and speed-freak attention spans.

At least a little more sympathy was spent this outing to depict the infant monsters in fleeting shots of nicely done model animation by

William Hodge. Steve Nell (design) and Mark Williams (on-set execution) also worked hard to create the makeup for the adolescent creatures, an effective variation on Rick Baker's original design, though Cohen remains overly coy with the teasing glimpses of the critters and often stages the scenes involving the effects too shoddily, making poor use of acceptable man-in-suit monster makeup. Nevertheless, the original touches catch the viewer offguard throughout the film (a shot of one of the female's breast feeding her monster baby, the lawyers' contract forcing Monarcy into media exploitation of his tragic parental role, etc.), making this third entry in the series as frustrating and as watchable as ever.

Note: Cohen regular James Drago's set-as James Perkins, and also note that Cohen shot this back-to-back with RETURN TO SALLY'S LOT, also intended for direct-to-video release from Warner Brothers. (SB)

THE HOUSEKEEPER (1987)

d: Olympia Dukakis



Rita (A TASTE OF HONEY) Tushingham plays an English woman held back by her dyslexia and illiteracy and dominated by her abusive father. Smothering the old buffer with a pillow, she leaves for America to work as a domestic for a rich, nosbuck family who live in an isolated mansion in the rural countryside. The meticulous maid keeps the house spotless clean and orderly, but begins to hallucinate like mad. Barking dogs, spiders, bloody knives, and her old deaf papa keep turning up in the damndest places. Things get really out of hand when the befriends

the town's prostitute-turned-religious-zealer who is even further 'round the bend than she is. Instilling in her apocalyptic visions of salvation against her wealthy employers, the nancy engages in an all-out Maniac-style massacre of the bourgeoisie that ends up in a pair of dual twist endings.

Based on Ruth Rendell's novel, *A Judgment in Stone*, THE HOUSEKEEPER is an odd little shocker. Tashuh-hem's dyslexia is handled in a gentle "subject TV" fashion while her character is shown to be wholly venomous and uncompassionate. Jackie Burroughs saves the day as the hacket fanatic, writhing with the Holy Spirit during church services, decked out in hot pants and platform boots. It's the type of role Susie Tyrell was born to play, a de rigueur actress for this brand of "psychotic lady" horror. If you're in the mood for a more subtle type of screen thriller, THE HOUSEKEEPER performs its chores adequately. (CG)

GYLLERY OF HORROR

d: David L. Hewitt



In the main of bad movie making, certain names stand out—the now legendary Edward D. Wood, Jr., Richard E. Cunha, and Phil Tucker come to mind. Add to this unsavory crew the name of David L. Hewitt. Hewitt is responsible for the lamentably cheap "remake" of THE TIME TRAVELERS, JOURNEY TO THE CENTER OF TIME.

GYLLERY OF HORRORS is an even cheaper rip-off of DR. TERROR'S HOUSE OF HORRORS and is well nigh unwatchable. John Carradine hosts this anthology movie weasing a rented tax and

standing in front of a mediocre painting of a beach landscape.

The stories were all warmed over EC comic variations of Dr. Frankenstein, vampires, werewolves, and other supernatural stuff, but are so wretchedly written and acted, they'll make you long for the unintentional humor of Ed Wood.

The sets look exactly like what any high school drama department would come up with, the "action" all play multiple roles in each story, making for mass confusion, and the whole thing is so listless, it's a real struggle just to stay awake.

Carradine's introductions go on at such length and are so clichéd that they must be what they appear to be padding. Poor old Lon Chaney plays yet another doctor trying to save the dead with electro-magnetism and every kind of dining is the worst.

There is some unintentional humor, but not enough to warrant a rental. This one is for serious bad movie buffs and completists only. The poorest example of below-the-bottom-of-the-barrel grade Z trash. (SM)

SUGAR HILL (1971)

d: Paul Madansky



The first time I watched this low-budget, voodoo/zombie epic, my opinion of it was not very favorable. However, after two or three repeated viewings, I've begun to enjoy this somewhat tongue-in-cheek horror tale.

When Sugar's boyfriend is brutally beaten and killed because he wouldn't sell his night club to the town's crime boss (Quarry), she seeks revenge on those responsible. Sugar enlists the aid of Mama Matriarch, an old witch (no pun intended) who lives in a

rundown old plantation house, situated on land overrun with plant growth, trees and even quicksand. In short, a pretty creepy place. With just the right amount of atmosphere needed for a voodoo ceremony in which Sugar has Mama Matriarch call upon the services of Baron Samedi (Don Pedro Colley, who suspiciously resembles Geoffrey Holder's portrayal of Baron Samedi in the James Bond film, LIVE AND LET DIE, which was released a year earlier), lord of the netherworld of the undead. Sugar asks Baron Samedi to give her the power to destroy her enemies in exchange for Sugar to be his bride at the time when her vengeance is complete. He then calls for his undead negro slaves to rise from their burial graves on the grounds of the plantation house. Lo and behold, in one of the film's most effective sequences, we see the undead corpses, male and female, rise from their dirt- and leaf-covered graves. Unfortunately, the zombies' chunky makeup, especially their cut-in-half ping-pong eyeballs (spraypainted a silvery grey), somewhat dampens the effectiveness of this scene.

Now that Sugar has her army of zombie hit men (and ladies, too!), she is ready to fulfill her plan for retribution.

One by one Morgan's henchmen are brutally killed in various unpleasant ways. One particular death scene has a big negro guy by the name of Fabulous managed to death by a group of female zombies with long, sharp, black fingernails. Another effective death sequence involves Morgan's thug, George, who is lured to the old plantation house by Sugar Hill. She pretenses him a good time. However, once inside the house, George sees Baron

Samedi, who is levitating in a corner in the room. George fires his gun at Samedi, but it has no effect as dust, not blood, flows from the bullet wounds in Samedi's chest and stomach. Next, George is forced by Samedi to kill himself with a sharp knife.

Valentine (Richard Lawson), a cop who has been in charge of finding who has been killing Morgan's men, mysteriously falls down a flight of stairs, breaking his leg but feeling no pain as Sugar (Macki Hey) tells Samedi to only discipline, not kill, Valentine (a former lover) from being involved in this case. Finally, Morgan (Robert Quarry) meets his death in quicksand and his girlfriend, Celeste (Bettyanne Rose), is taken as Baron Samedi's bride instead of Sugar; because she is a buxom blonde, I guess. And before the Baron goes back to the world of the undead, he leaves Sugar a patient. His case with a gold head on it for Sugar Hill to keep in case she needs his services again.

Released as THE ZOMBIES OF SUGAR HILL on TV and cut to 83 minutes. (DL)

DR. GORE

d: J. G. "Pat" Patterson



A legendary "bad" film by Pat Patterson, an associate of Herschell Gordon Lewis, DR. GORE has all the trademarks of a Lewis film: senseless violence, brackets of gore, dimwitted hoolies, idiot dialog, gun chewing, beehive coiffed fannies and hideous soundtrack music. In other words, seat this tape!

Herschell Gordon Lewis himself introduces the cassette, which is alone worth the price of a rental. "What are we here for?" inquires the Wizard of Gore, sucking on

an unlit pipe. "We're here for the gore!"

Patterson himself plays the good doctor in yet another FRANKENSTEIN variation. This Dr. wants to build the perfect female using the best parts of women he meets in seedy bars and truck stops. He's assisted by the obnoxious henchback (named Igore, natch) in finding, stripping, and dismembering several hapless women and disposing of the leftovers in a vat of acid. One woman has her arms and legs amputated, another her hands, and in one especially disturbing scene, a still-conscious victim has her eyeballs yanked out by what appears to be a pair of pliers.

The joke is on the Doctor, though, his "perfect" woman is at blowzy, dampy, and sagging with midriff bulge at the bimbo he slaughtered in order to make her. Worse still, she's a complete slut and starts sleeping with every bartender and truck driver in Milwaukee (where DR. GORE was filmed).

Made in the early 70's, DR. GORE was the last splatter movie made before the use of profanity à la Tom Savini became widespread, and Patterson makes the most of it. Entrails slither, flesh cooks in the acid bath, and severed limbs are in abundance. DR. GORE is not very scary, but ladies on the gore and the humor (much of it unintentional) by the truckload.

DR. GORE would be a great party tape for a gathering of goateehounds. Recommended. (SM)

SUCCUBARE (1981/84)
aka INCREDIBLY
FANTASTIC SUCCUBARE

Most Asian horrors, retitled, miserably dubbed, and sans any credits on film or box. This oddity is a Chinese horror-martial arts fantasy, though the martial arts action definitely takes back seat to the horrific and mystical elements, rooted as they are in legend and folklore. Four princesses rule over a tribe in the mountains of Northwestern China, and lay some heavy curses on their lovers who leave or are otherwise unfaithful to them. Their jealousy finally begins to touch the innocents around them, infecting a child and a relative of one of their victims, forcing the princesses to corrupt a man and ending happily for all. Snakes figure predominately in the magic, in the running scenes, blood drinking, seizures, distended abdomens, and impregnation with writhing worms, bug-barking, and (when things get slow) there's a geek who eats lizards, frogs, and insects. Though it isn't much of a movie, SUCCUBARE is fascinating nevertheless for its delicious imagery and approaches to story telling and filmmaking that are completely alien to Western eyes. BIG TROUBLE IN LITTLE CHINA fans will also enjoy seeing Carter Wong (Thunder, the fellow who got so angry that he exploded in BIG TROUBLE) in a starring role. (SB)

GOD TOLD ME TO (1976)
d: Larry Cohen

Larry Cohen is known for his humorous horror films such as Q, THE WINGED SERPENT, IT'S ALIVE AND IT'S ALIVE II and THE STUFF. But in this 1976 release, his usual black humor is absent, this is serious stuff and seriously scary.

Tony LoBianco is a decent, religious NYC police detective

who becomes profoundly disturbed when a series of bizarre murders breaks out in the Big Apple. When asked why they: (A) massacred pedestrians with a high-powered rifle (B) slaughtered their entire family, or (C) took a shot at the Mayor in a St. Patrick's Day parade, or any number of bloody deeds, each killer responds that "God told me to!" Being a good Catholic who attends Mass every morning, LoBianco naturally gets upset when it begins to appear that this may be true.

There is some mambo jumbo about women in the 50's being impregnated by UFOs, but the real message of GOD TOLD ME TO is very evident—if this is a real force for evil and suffering and bloodshed in the world today, it is not the Devil, it is Jesus Christ himself. No wonder this film was condemned by the Catholic Legion of Decency. It's trailer banned from some radio and TV stations, and its title changed to the more generic DEMON. In some areas, the film itself was reportedly banned.

But with a video release, GOD TOLD ME TO is now available to all serious gorehounds and horror fans. And make no mistake, no matter what your religious beliefs, this is one scary movie with a well-thought message and the courage of its convictions.

Cohen makes good use of NYC locations and some offbeat casting. Andy Kaufman is the uniformed cop who goes bonkers, Sandy Dennis is LoBianco's wife, and Richard Lynch is the Christ figure/alien offspring. A bleak, terrifying, and disturbing movie. Recommended. (SM)

PANIC (1976)

d: Anthony Richmond



When a scientist is transformed by a botched bartoreal experiment, a secret government agent (David Warbeck of TWINS OF EVIL and THE LAST HUNTER, fame) is brought in by the local town police to discreetly hunt down and terminate the now monstrous doctor. With his trusty secret gas gun (containing a gas that apparently only effects monsters), as Warbeck's character in the film never does a protective oxygen mask when spraying the poor doctor with the lethal substance), Warbeck searches in the underground sewers to find and destroy the monstrous, mutating doctor before the poor, hideously-ugly scientist spreads his deadly germs throughout the entire city. Some good monster makeup (the monster's face is crater-like and gelatinous) cannot save this film's routine plot, unimaginative direction and lousy dubbing. Makeup effects by Rino Casalini. Janet Agren also starred in Lucio Fulci's GATES OF HELL. (DL)

THE DEVIL'S POSSESSED (1977)

d: Leon Klimovsky



Mix one part swashbuckler romance, one part Macbeth (by way of Kurosawa's THRONE OF BLOOD), and one part Paul Naschy devil worship/blood drinking torture movie (in unusually restrained form), and you've got THE DEVIL'S POSSESSED. Only Naschy's presence and the non-supernatural horror elements make this nominally a horror film, as the film depicts the rise and fall of a 16th century French tyrant, obsessed with achieving immortality through bogus alchemy and



Blood sacrifice. Naschy (real name Jacinto Molina) puts his athletic abilities to good use, and director Klarovsky (a frequent Naschy collaborator until the mid-'70's) makes good use of some spectacular Spanish abbeys and castles, but given the straightforward approach and tame torture sequences, there's not much to recommend to any but die-hard Naschy fans. Not to be confused with Naschy/Molina's directorial debut, INQUISICION ('76), which used similar settings in medieval France with a heavier dose of graphic gore. This might be EL TIERRITO DEL FRANCES (THE LAND OF THE FRENCH, 1978), but it seems too tame to date from so late as the 70's. Anybody out there know, drop us a line at Deep Red.

(SB)

THE SEVENTH SIGN (1988)
d. Carl Schultz



Yet another OMEN-inspired Biblical Armageddon-here-and-now fantasy, this one of interest for being the antithesis of the usual gory AntiChrist holom, and attempting something positive with the old doom and-destruction tradition. The formula remains essentially the same as a series of ominous prophecies are sequentially fulfilled, pointing to a final and inescapable breaking of "The Seventh Seal," when heaven is empty of new souls and God's Final Judgment ensues. The End of the World is at hand once again, folks, but the core of this film isn't the usual deceptively manipulated string of butchery: it's whether pregnant Denil Moore has the wherewithal to break the chain of events and Save the World. For once, the human element is engaging, as Moore and her husband (TERMINATOR's

Michael Biehn) struggle toward the hoped for birth of their first child, on the tenuous heels of a prior miscarriage and suicide attempt. Though Moore tends to act like a typical hoover hausfrau, with a predilection for snooping around apartments she doesn't belong in (not my type of landlord, y'understand), the conflict between her despair/deathwish and the love-of-life/self-sacrifice necessary if she, her child, and mankind are to survive is strongly felt in the film's first half. Indeed enough of it remains to make the decisive moment of the absurd climax still moving. The problem with the film (and this entire sub-genre) is that once the portentious cosmic events overwhelm the story, their weight cause the entire stacked deck to collapse into a silly, contrived, and progressively more ridiculous mishmash that smoothes the human drama and hopelessly trivializes the concepts of God, religion, and Armageddon that the story exploits. Once we realize that we are supposed to accept Denil Moore as "The Seventh Seal" itself, and Jürgen Prochnow as God's immortal messenger, witness, and (possibly) Son (curiously echoing Scott Glenn's role opposite Prochnow in the equally ambitious and ludicrous THE KEEP), credibility is stretched past the breaking point and the finale becomes too laughable to work. Their hearts may have been in the right places, but the filmmakers still end up with their heads unintentionally jammed up their asses. Peter Weir's THE LAST WAVE ('77) remains the most effective example of this overworked vein, significantly eschewing the usual Judeo-Christian dogma and the attendant, obligatory Bible thumping. (SB)

RASPUTIN
d. Ernst Hoffman
Original title RASPUTIN:
GÖGLEN AM ZARENHOF



There have been over 20 films dealing with the life and death of the notorious Rasputin, the "Mad Monk" who held such a mysterious hold over the final Russian Czarist regime. Those of them appeared a mere year after Rasputin's spectacular death in 1916, he proved nearly impossible to kill as imaginary bogeymen like The Shape and Jason (poison, bullets, stabbing, drowning, and exposure) finally snuffed Rasputin, depending upon which historical account you prefer to! He has been played by such distinguished actors as Conrad Veidt, Lionel Barrymore, Harry Baur, Pierre Brasseur, and Christopher Lee (in Hammer's 1966 RASPUTIN THE MAD MONK). Given Rasputin's legendary reputation for licentiousness and sexual excess (coupled with Swengy-like powers), I suppose it was inevitable that there would be a pomegranate version of the story, and here it is. Director Hoffman specialized in adult fare during the 1970's (SECRETS OF SWEET SIXTEEN, CAMPUS SWINGERS, ROOMMATES HERE AND NOW), though much of it was not as hardcore as this feature. At least the x-ray, zesty musical score adds honor to the endless penetration shots. Alexander Conte is the most neatly trimmed Rasputin in the history of cinema. He doesn't bring much physical presence or emotional intensity to the role, but he sure can screw on camera. Surprisingly, this occasionally gory German production cops out before Rasputin's assassination, after much violence, tortures (flogging, acid

poured into wounds, an ear shot off, etc.), and a rousing attempt on Rasputin's life worthy of Savini, the monk walks down a hallway and the movie ends!

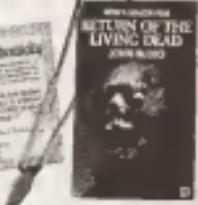
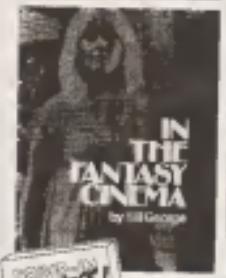
The obligatory sex scenes work well within the story until the interminable orgy in the Czar's palace midway through the picture, which stops the film dead in its tracks. But, of course, this is what the audience this film was intended for came to see. Now too good, but what a curio. I would guess this was made in the late 1970's. (SB)

ZOMBIE HIGH (1987)
d. Ron Lind



Beautiful Virginia Madsen is a young co-ed accepted into a prestigious academy with a proven track record of producing some of this nation's greatest successes. The student body is cold and aloof, everybody dresses and talks alike. Strange things are happening late at night at the college medical lab. If you've gotten past the title of this number, you can probably figure what's going on by now. Making yuppie monstrosities is at once anti-establishment and redundant. Anybody who has done time at a "diploma mill" has come up with the same realization. ZOMBIE HIGH knows all the clichés and fails to inject...er, "life," into the proceedings.

This flick is so monotonous and cardboard, a standard car chase/week at the finale jars the viewer out of a cinematic stupor induced by the preceding 90 minutes. "What's that? People are moving?" ZOMBIE HIGH is the first zombie film made by zombies for zombie audiences. (GG)



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